

FEBRUARY 2019

ISSUE 5

PRIVATE SUITE

EXPLORING MALLSOFT

GRAFTON TANNER'S
BABBLING CORPSE

FLAP & GLIMMER

HOW TO DRESS AESTHETIC

ALBUM REVIEWS

FICTION & ART

INTERVIEW WITH

bloodwave

WHO'S IN?

ALL WERE
AND
WELL

ISSUE 5

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Magazines are peculiar things. They live on longform, taking topics apart under a cold magnifying glass until they are clearly laid out for the reader in all their intricacies, but also on subjective stories, a single person's take on the happenings of a city, a job or a music scene. They publish journalistic writing, but that would die without design and layout bringing everything together into one whole. And then they are obviously physical objects that can be seen lying on a table from the corner of the eye, picked up, skimmed through, discarded, picked up again and shared and discussed until falling apart at the seams.

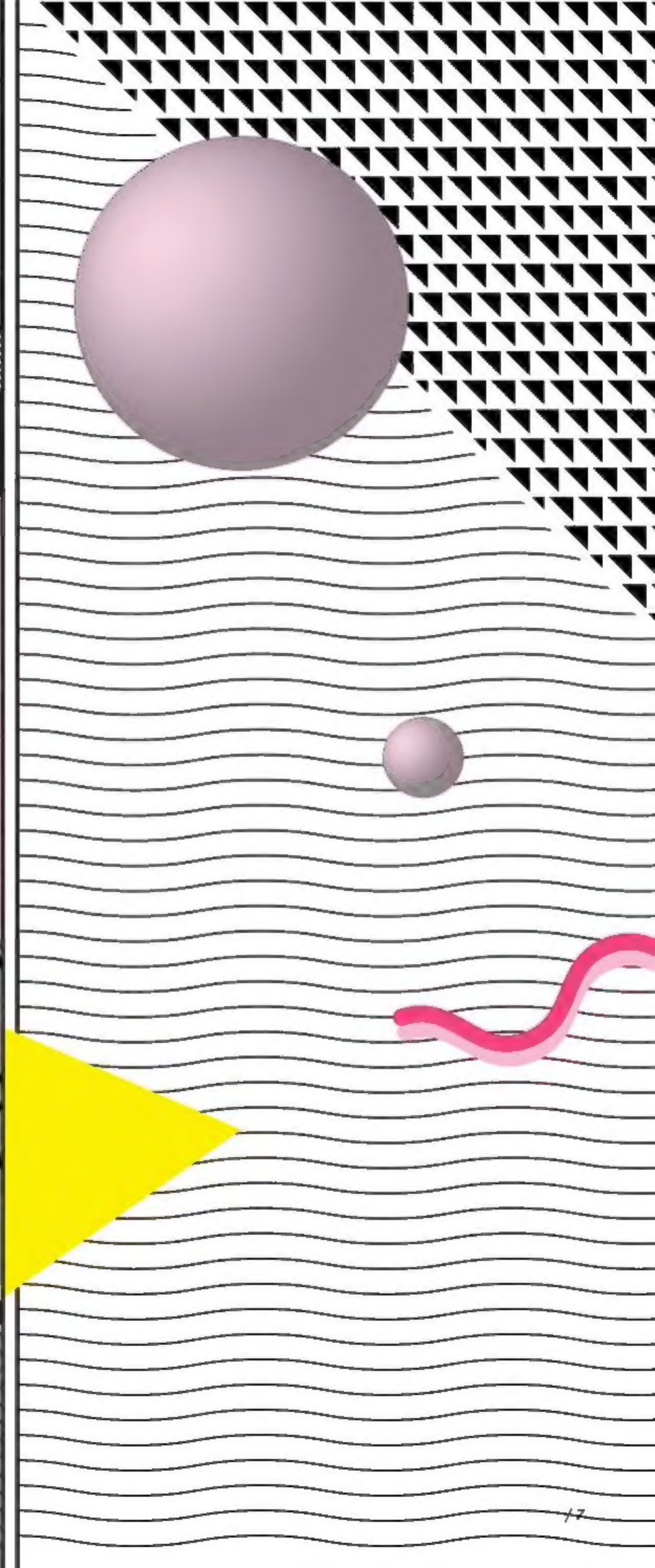
We here at PSM try to take this touching-on-all-edges as an opportunity. We publish the magazine online, but we also offer print copies by subscription (worldwide for just \$18 per issue, check our Patreon!). We publish videos and podcast episodes. Our writers can be reviewers, reporters or poets. The magazine is the heart, but the body of all things vaporwave keeps expanding as we rebuild our website and start a news department to deliver updates on the scene even in between magazine releases.

These things are not happening because somebody planned them. They are happening because if someone on the team is passionate about doing something, it will happen. So whether you are a writer, a programmer, a graphic designer or an audio editor, we have a forum for you to be seen and/or heard. This magazine runs on passion, and if you have some to spare, we will gladly welcome it.

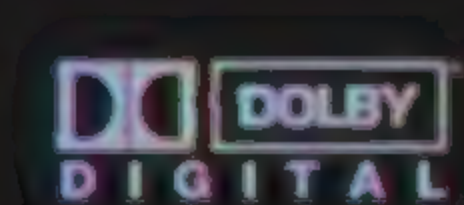
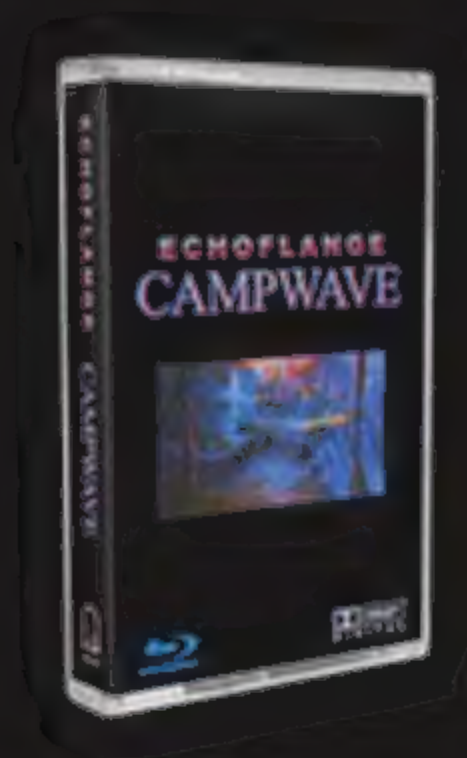
–Zarasophos
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Babbling Corpse

Vaporwave and the Commodification of Ghosts

GRAFTON TANNER

2016, ZERO BOOKS (84 PAGES)

ZERO-BOOKS.NET/BOOKS/BABBLING-CORPSE



This isn't an especially pleasant moment to be living in the global West. It's fraught with trauma over rampant historical and geographic dislocation, obsession with humanity's imminent demise, anxiety about late capitalism's unfettered expansion, and a general suffusion of simulations upon simulations that feel like ghostly presences animating our otherwise soulless and recycled media objects.

For all this, author Grafton Tanner argues in *Babbling Corpse*, vaporwave serves as both looking glass and touchstone. More than a musical genre or an artistic aesthetic, vaporwave is for Tanner a "sensibility," a "desire to turn our fascinations and fantasies into more disquieting forms, to suggest that not all is perfectly well, to remind us that maybe we have not been liberated in the

Internet Age." That's what the book is about—a culture of commodification, phantasmagoria, and existential malaise that makes vaporwave a salient, even desirable, impulse.

Babbling Corpse is its own kind of mall, each chapter a kiosk showcasing the latest and greatest in cultural critique. All the big brands—object-oriented ontology, accelerationism, hauntology—are in stock and on display. Shoppers can largely browse the storefronts in any order, popping in and out of the various analyses. But while each chapter addresses a different dimension of the cultural mélange Tanner constructs, vaporwave wafts throughout the entire book, the ever-present muzak of Tanner's critical analysis. As part of a broader exploration of sampled media's uncanniness (Chapter 1), for instance, vaporwave serves as an example of "music that comes from nowhere

that can be attributed to no one, or at best a faceless moniker, and resists easy analysis." In an argument about the Western world's unsettling preoccupation with its own demise, "anthrodecentric thought," as Tanner puts it in Chapter 2, vaporwave appears as "the sound of the outside world of things—electronic technology, mass-produced goods, non-places," an apotheosis of what the world feels like when "we are allowed access to everything all the time." Everywhere, Tanner finds vaporwave—the prism that refracts our mass-produced nostalgia and the soundtrack for our hollow and vacuous times.

Most compelling is Tanner's final chapter, a sustained rumination on consumer culture in a post-9/11 world. Numerous vaporwave artists and producers claim that horrific first day of the 21st Century as inspiration for their work (indeed, many as "zero point" in the alternate timeline

vaporwave continues to unspool), and Tanner seizes on that connection to underscore "just how commodified the ghosts of our past are." The September 11 attacks, he writes, "shocked us into a state of cultural regression," and we've "been living in that period ever since, plumbing the past for comforting sounds and songs, sounds from periphery and mundanity of daily life before the great unraveling at the start of this century." Vaporwave, then, is part-traumatic expression, part-coping mechanism, and part critique—a "jarring indictment of consumerist culture" that somehow simultaneously celebrates and mocks its varied source materials.

Tanner's claim to have discovered what makes vaporwave unique as a new method of Internet-produced "punk" sounds dubious, since several such movements would seem to function as critiques of late capitalism and "invite us to react emotionally to

a genre of music that has subversive potential." Its loftier claims aside, however, *Babbling Corpse* is certainly valuable reading for fans of vaporwave (the music, the art, and the sensibility alike). It's accessible enough for readers without a background in critical theory—a consequence, perhaps, of Tanner's tendency to linger agonizingly on recapitulations of other critics' arguments at the expense of advancing his own—but also rewarding for anyone who's wondered what would happen if Zizek, Jameson, and Derrida started listening to Macintosh Plus, Midnight Television, or ghosting. And ultimately, the book serves as fruitful fodder for a cultural imaginary in desperate need of new directions and possibilities. "For now, we live in the mall," Tanner morosely concludes, "but I think it's closing soon."

semioticrobotic
REVIEWS WRITER

Airwaves Burgundy

AcquiredTaste

acquired-taste.bandcamp.com/album/airwaves-burgundy

Airwaves Burgundy by ~AcquiredTaste is the soundtrack for Phaethon City, Mars. Listening to it, you'll find yourself casually strolling through a place without poverty and obsessed with circumspection, taking in the sounds of the night, wrapped up in the lives of the city's extraterrestrial inhabitants.

Touting itself as an experimental, escapist and even future-funk take on mallsoft, *Airwaves Burgundy* starts off strong. Its first track, "It's Alright," succinctly foreshadows the rest of the album, as elements of ■ more groovy and funkadelically playful side are immediately evident. As the album progresses, ~AcquiredTaste builds a soundscape with personal and endearing flair, one that truly makes his envisioning of Phaethon City come alive. Adding such ■ unique touch can be particularly challenging with sample-based work and isn't ■ task to be taken lightly. But with great skill ~AcquiredTaste is able to make listeners feel like regular denizens of a world in which they are ultimately alien.

The samples themselves have been plundered—stacked with such effects as wonderfully timed skip and ever-present reverb—and ~AcquiredTaste adds a unique twist to classic songs, presenting them in ■ fresh, eye-opening manner. Samples come from such classics as "Eveready Man" by Lakeside (featured in "Forever Ready"), and as ■ result it's hard to think of this album as anything other than upbeat, catchy and ultimately inspiring. ~AcquiredTaste says the sample is "hands down one of the happiest, and jolliest songs out there. It just makes you feel good." Additional samples make for some evocative tracks. Thick bass from "Keep on Lovin' Me" by The Whispers, showcased in "Come Back," is one of the strongest

examples of this. *Airwaves Burgundy* is an ode to the classics, spun about ~AcquiredTaste's audio playground of future-funk, low fidelity groovescape.

It truly feels like this album could be playing in the background of any of your favorite shopping centers. Each track sounds like its own shop front. While they all possess ■ common element in ■ muffled, distant bass, or an omnipresent tinny funk melody, the tracks all manage to sound as unique as the storefronts you'd expect to find in ■ mall on Mars. As the album transitions into its half-way point with "...one moment please," the listener receives a chance at intermission. From this point on, however, the album goes hard, challenging our ideas of what mallsoft is and could be. It's mallsoft plus, and brings with it an extremely luxurious, ritzy feeling of class, panache, and glamour. "Don't Forget -" utilizes Patrice Rushen's "Forget Me Nots" in ■ manner far more catchy than Will Smith's "Men In Black" iteration. "Reach!" does well to take Sister Sledge's "Reach Your Peak" and spin it with that distant feel reminiscent of old VHS aerobics workouts. The eponymous track, "Airwaves Burgundy," is nestled right at the end of the album, and with its delicate feel entices you to consider a second playthrough.

Airwaves Burgundy stands out among ~AcquiredTaste's work. The Sydney-based artist draws inspiration from 猫 シ Corp., VHS LOGOS, I Am Adam, of Eternia—and, most importantly, Saint Pepsi. "This may sound odd," ~AcquiredTaste says, "but his early music is the sound of the waiting room to my dad's office during the years 1993 to 2003. His later tracks are nothing but a ridiculous, commercialised, internet party-fest and I love it all."

For mallsoft lovers wanting a little more from the genre, *Airwaves Burgundy* is ■ must-listen. And if at the end of the journey you find yourself wanting more, be sure to check out *South City*, *Cosmic Rip*, and *Redundant Flavour* to see what else you've been missing from this artist.



PLASTIC WHATEVER

Desired

neoncityrecords.bandcamp.com/album/plastic-whatever

Desired's *PLASTIC WHATEVER* is a meditation on the hyperkinetic but dispassionate life, a synthetic hodgepodge of lollipop hooks and frenetic drops precisely engineered to keep us moving, two steps ahead of a blunt and crushing reality.

The tableau is a pleasingly garish one. Tracks like "Plastic Life," "Neon Maze," and "Distorted Silhouette" make Side A a swirl of pink house lights and teal bubblegum—essential ingredients in this cocktail meant to overload the sensorium. Bring sunglasses. Side B is much more wistful, as the final hours before last call tend to be. "Fairy Tale" is full of longing for someone special but no one in particular. "Floor 25" is the location of an after party where you hate everyone but stay anyway, because the drinks are free and functional. "Moment of Summer" is a precious bit of reverie amid the sex, drugs, high-pile carpet, and numbing loneliness.

PLASTIC WHATEVER is the soundtrack for a scenario that's by now quite familiar: another listless night in a neon-soaked city that's all sparkle and no substance, another aimless trek through a string of blindingly lustrous but forgettable clubs, another evening spent doing everything possible to keep the morning—with its inevitable dimension and demands—at bay. The true gift from Desired, however, is that *PLASTIC WHATEVER* ventures where other future funk and nu disco releases (including the artist's prior efforts) frequently don't. Its soundtrack constitutes a space between the clubs, so we experience both the excessively polished, glossy nightclubs and the grimy, rain-soaked alleys connecting them. With "Hotel 1987," we're wending through the streets with our hands stuffed in the pockets

of a slippery nylon trench coat, searching for more and better stimulation. "Android Shelter" guides us past that ugly place just out of sight, where the mecha go to die. "Commercial Break" reminds us who brought us the entire experience. Movement between the oversaturated and the crumbling, between the bright and the scummy, are central to Desired's efforts here.

Pried from its slick polymer blister pack, this album glints in the steam leaking from that vent in the sidewalk. It's an hypnotic collection of polycarbonate ephemera encapsulating the candy-coated nihilism of a life lived only for the next manufactured moment—the ideal backdrop to this incandescent (non)place completely devoid of meaning, this disposable dreamworld, this plastic whatever.



4 Hours from Yesterday

MiraiCult

miraicult.bandcamp.com/album/4-hours-from-yesterday

Straight from Tokyo, MiraiCult drops their 2nd album *4 Hours from Yesterday*.

Blending elements of chillwave and ambient with a vaporwave approach to sampling creates a tasteful, dreamy mix of an album. As someone with a major weakness for the ambient styles of vaporwave, this combination has a real magnetism. Sometimes all you want to do is tune in and zone out while listening to a soundscape, to lose yourself in something huge and encompassing.

The album opens with the bleeping futurism of "Gateway," which seamlessly morphs into the rest of the seven-track album. While the dominant stylings here are thick ambient layers, MiraiCult also shows variety, sneaking in little hints of vaportrap on "Ephemeris," and original saxophone work on the title track. Elsewhere, the sexy "Hypostasis" and "Lipglossed Sunsets" recall the 80s strut of *Luxury Elite*, a genre compliment if ever there was one.

The standout is the album's title track, which grooves and bops at over seven minutes long. A hefty run time like this has to be earned, and the fact that it does so is all the more impressive. If anything on *4 Hours...* exemplifies MiraiCult's potential, it's this. With a warbling vocal line over tight drum hits, tinkling guitars, and a constant beat behind shifting melodies, the track just clicks together. Looking at the album cover while listening, with its magnetic metal logo hovering above a red desert (Mars?) it's easy to drift off into space.

Finding new music to listen to can be a daunting task, given the sheer amount of quality work (almost a decade of vaporwave now) out there in various corners of the internet. The tyranny of choice is real. If you're looking for a fresh, chilled out new release, *4 Hours from Yesterday* is a great place to start. It's available on cassette as well as digital, complete with the classic obi strip packaging.



Love in the Time of Lexapro

Oneohtrix Point Never

opn.warp.net/release/111863-oneohtrix-point-never-love-in-the-time-of-lexapro

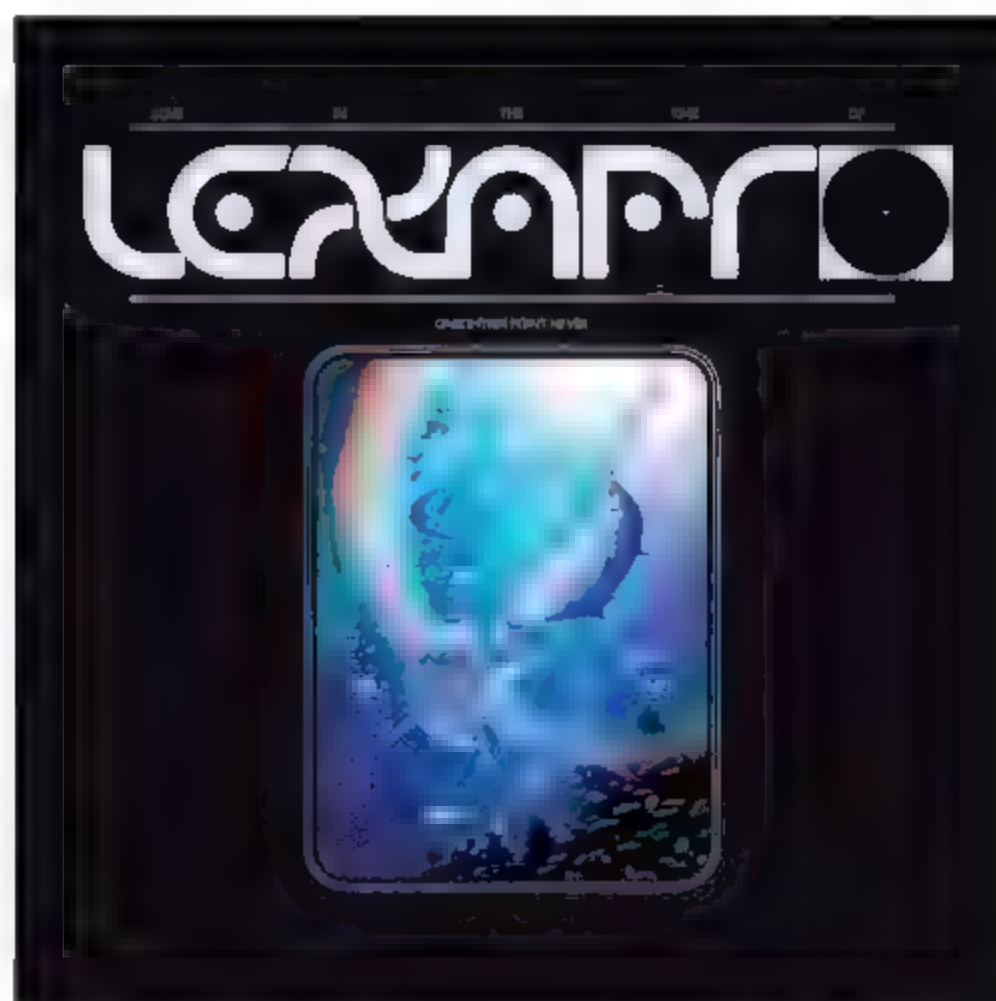
When the teacher enters the classroom, you have to stand up. Chuck Person's *Eccojams*, released in 2010, was the album that essentially codified vaporwave as a genre. And while it still remains Chuck's only official release, the man behind the moniker, Daniel Lopatin, has been a prolific electronic musician for over a decade now.

Love in the Time of Lexapro has a special relevance to fans of Lopatin's vaporwave output. The artwork says it all—he is fully aware of what he's doing. It contains a number of dolphins swimming around in a bright sea, with a rainbow reflecting in the water. It's impossible to not recall the (at this point in time) iconic *Eccojams* album cover featuring the collaged *Ecco The Dolphin* box art. But unlike the harsh angles of that image, this time the dolphins swim happy and free, an obvious nod to the mood-altering drug the album title references. And no sharks are present.

The album's content is a grab-bag of unique recordings, which could be enjoyed by a hardcore or even first-time Oneohtrix fan. You owe it to yourself as a vaporwave explorer to give it a spin. The title track, a fan favourite at Lopatin's live shows for years, now fully studio-recorded in all its glory. Sea synths wash over us, with a few sonar bleeps popping, it's lovely and dreamlike. Listen closely and you can almost hear a vaporwave tinge.

It's no secret that Lopatin has since moved away from the genre he birthed back in 2010. This is understandable in a way; vaporwave relies on anonymity, novelty and a degree of irony. It is tricky to repeat and revisit as an artist

unless you completely submerge yourself in the genre (à la 猫 シ Corp) or keep reinventing yourself (like Vektroid). It seems Lopatin said all he really wanted to say with *Eccojams*—he constructed his vaporwave vision perfectly, and has not felt the need to tread the same ground since. But still, that original dreamy nostalgia lives on in his work. And it's just nice to see the dolphins again.



vcnrot // screen of solace

vcnrot.bandcamp.com // virtua94records.bandcamp.com



- Nourish your ears with the sweetest of interviews with vaporwave's finest
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- Get your Private Suite fix between magazine releases

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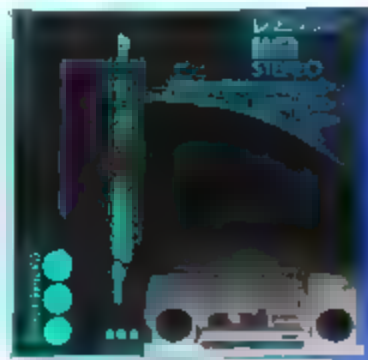
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Rapidfire

We dig around the internet
so you don't have to

BEFAjams by Zhurnal Mod



A twist on Zhurnal Mod's signature method, *BEFAjams* intercuts the Russian producer's ever-hypnotic, slowed-down loops with brief, signalwave-esque tracks evoking hauntingly hollow half-memories. This circadian cycle of mantra to melody makes the whole album enigmatic, understated, and elegant.

deliriously...daniel

Remember Me By by raglir



Album art often sets a mood, but here it crafts a nuanced atmosphere. The suffocating ambience of crackling green fog infects every track, bringing with it eerily organic drones and aimlessly wanderlusting phasers. Titanic beats echo like thunderclaps to keep the narrative journey dense and beckoning.

deliriously...daniel

Spiritual Awareness by DJ KUWABARA



You know those guys that are in the background of those old Neo Geo fighters? This album is like a night out with those guys, dosed on Adderall at a 1995 warehouse rave. Great stuff if you're in the mood to go hard.

maki

LOCALRADIO オンライン by Fantasy☆Deluxe & Virtua94



A nice mallsoft comp, with the first half guiding you through the mall, and the second half taking place after you set up your new computer and get online. Great jazz, funk, and pop samples to keep you consistently engaged.

maki

Stratospheres by Ahero



Ahero's debut album, a mix between electronica and vaporwave, is almost a love-letter to George Clanton. A tranquil trip to the skies. Heavily inspired by Clanton but put together in a way that's still incredibly original.

pinker

Rapidfire

AUTOPLAYをオンにする

by .tif

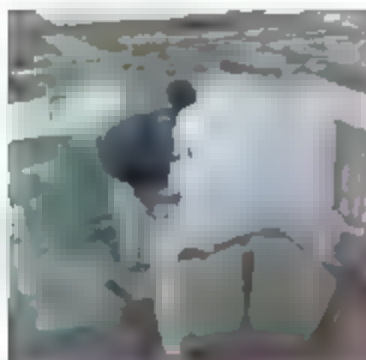


This album's twisted look into the past presents and displays popular tracks in a distorted ethereal frame, frequently causing me to check if my headphones are broken as the tracks stutter and crackle as the album progresses.

Puffycheeses

CONSTRUCTION

by Looking Through Sheets



Smooth, jazzy flows play through your headphones as you sit at your desk. A brand new mall is being built just outside your building. As the album progresses, the construction slows and so does your perception of reality, turning into dark, slow drones.

Puffycheeses

Daebyoo by 26 COLORS



A plunderphonic album which varies wildly from track to track. From the happy-sounding future-funk-inspired Chinatown NYC to the creepy, near-terrifying soundscape on the title track. It's obvious that 26 COLORS wants to make their debut unique and special.

pinker

Spark Society by HATENA



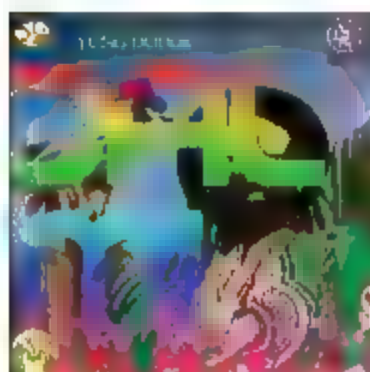
A groovy, funky album front to back. Interesting chops and loops for all of the samples keep the whole thing engaging and entertaining throughout.

pinker

Flap *idfire*



Cal Mi Doddi
by Yung Doddi



DHR-reminiscent percussion behind Matthew-era Kool Keith angry/stream-of-consciousness lines. Unexpectedly high production value. Flap.

flappi

Baroque Flap
by DapperFlapper



Shout out to DapperFlapper for unearthing this piece of history. Bach should have stayed away from the mic, though. Flap.

flappi

TWU3: Happiness Forever

by M



This album is objectively garbage but artistically as a meme and a statement it's absolutely amazing. Flap.

Flappycheeses

Flappy 離陸

by Bad Sun Corp.



(Jeff) "Hey Greg, wanna do the score for my sci-fi art project?"

(Greg) "For sure my dude."

(Jeff) "Thanks, I need it by tomorrow."

(Greg) "I got you. Gonna get crazy for the end credits though."

Flap.

flappi



UPCOMING RELEASES.TXT

Date	Artist	Album	Format	Label
2/1	UniBe@t	Origins	Digital, Cassette	Coraspect Records
2/1	Roex	Augmentation	Digital	Business Casual
2/2	SUI UZI	Night Songs Pt. 1	Cassette	Palm '84
2/3	desert sand feels warm at night	バビロンの空中庭園 上	Digital	Seikomart
2/6	Sangam	Sour Face & Broken Nights	Digital, Cassette	Hairs aBlazin'
2/8	Melonade	Dream Plaza	Digital, Cassette	Coraspect Records
2/8	FM Skyline	Advanced Memory Suite	Digital	Business Casual
2/9	Hiro Tadamatsu	The NeoKobe Nightly Selecta (Ltd. Cassette Reissue)	Digital, Cassette	Coraspect Records
2/9	UNI DELUXE	CITY LIGHTS	Cassette	Palm '84
2/14	Pope Coke 「コークの法王」	The Redo Tape	Digital	Pope Coke 「コークの法王」
2/15	Runners Club 95	Panama Papers	Digital, Vinyl	My Pet Flamingo
2/15	channel select	sails	Digital	Business Casual
2/17	Shizen	Free Fall	Digital, Cassette	Hairs aBlazin'
2/22	SUPERFLAT スーパーフラット	KABUKI BOOGIE	Digital	Business Casual
2/24	TUPPERWAVE	To you baby, with love	Vinyl	power_lunch corporation & The Vapor Room
2/27	Net-Uri	Net-Uri	Digital, Cassette	Hairs aBlazin'
2/TBA	リアムMAZE1981	Summer Funk	Digital, Cassette	Gulf Audio Company
3/1	PoLYGLoT	Comfort Couch	Digital, Cassette	Immersion Complete
3/2	NATIONAL ナショナル	Crossroads	Digital, Cassette	Palm '84
3/4	Scamlines	oサンコープ (SUNCORP.)	Vinyl	corp.oreal Tapes
3/7	Strawberry Station	Yesterday's Jam	Digital, Cassette	Gulf Audio Company
3/22	BarbWalters	Pleasure	Digital, Cassette	Business Casual
3/23	TUPPERWAVE	Koala Korp	Digital, Cassette, Vinyl	Sunset Grid / The Vapor Room
3/31	DARKNESS COLLECTIVE	NEOFOLD芸術的企業	Digital	7FORM
3/TBA	trashgh0st	Spectral Lament	Digital, Cassette	Halcyon Tapes
4/1	Mélonade	Mélonade	Digital, Cassette	Business Casual
4/1	Zer0 れい	ブラックマジック (Black Magic)	Digital, Vinyl	At Dusk Records and BRC30 Productions

20-Shine-teen: *The Future of Glimmer*

deliriously...daniel

With genre influences like chopped & screwed, hypnagogic pop, and especially chillwave, it only makes sense for vaporwave's refraction of old sounds to be taken in a chilling new direction. New microgenre-of-a-microgenre called glimmer is eyeing 2019 through a very particular prism.

Some of vaporwave's bountiful genre children hone in on a particular nostalgic niche within its parent sound, like mallsoft's hollow varnish or broken transmission's fractured audio ghosts. Others stake new territories in adjacent soundscapes, like future funk's nylon sugarcoat or hardvapour's disquieting adrenaline.

According to Tova, the de facto creator of glimmer, this sparkling new exploration might fall somewhere in the middle, with relatively specific subject matter but vapor-boundary pushing techniques.

"I'm a big fan of ice and crystals as an aesthetic and I often find myself wanting to listen to music that sounds like cold," says Tova, the artist behind Stevia Sphere, glaciære, and other aliases.

"When I formulated the idea for glimmer, I wanted to make sure that it sounded like neither vaporwave nor hardvapour," she continues. "I think the vaporwave scene is a good starting point for developing subgenres or microgenres. Hardvapour and metrosong both managed to sound very different from the original idea of vaporwave, and they both exist in a state of debate about whether or not they're subgenres of vaporwave or their own microgenres.

"No matter the connection, it's the internet that made sure that both vaporwave and glimmer could evolve, so in that way there's an important similarity."

Tova formally kicked off glimmer's development early last December, with

"[Glimmer's] kind of just zooming in on and expanding on many of the traits that already exist within other vaporwave subgenres really,"



A Glimmer of Hope. A 44-song compilation bringing artists across vaporwave's vast spectrum of sound, the album explores the various sonic manifestations of ice, crystals and more with songs like Augnos' "Frozen Lake" and Valet Girls' "gemstone cocktail."

"When I started, I expected that maybe 10 artists or so would submit tracks, but I got a lot more than that," Tova says of the album's creation. "Even though there's a lot of variety on the compilation, there are still many themes that are consistent throughout. There seems to exist some kind of international idea of how ice and crystals translate to music."

Where Tova hails from Sweden, *winterquilt* 愛が止ま is an English artist whose compilation track "bellevale" evokes a similar feeling to other *Glimmer of Hope* tracks: that of a desolately digitized and lonely, yet peaceful snowfield or nearby cave.

"[Glimmer's] kind of just zooming in on and expanding on many of the traits that already exist within other vaporwave subgenres really," *winterquilt* 愛が止ま says of his experience, adding that he had already written his track before learning glimmer shared its ideals. "It ties in to the influence of videogames on vaporwave, has an otherworldly vibe about it, and I think vaporwave is becoming more non-sample-based all the time... plus it's a pretty loose framework, so a lot can be done with it."

"We've only seen the tip of the iceberg yet :)"

His last point about sampling echoes Tova's production-side aims for the project and wider genre.

"Most of the music on the compilation is sample-free," she says. "I did not allow uncleared samples, mostly because I wanted to make sure the music didn't just sound like an extension of vaporwave. The most important sounds are probably digital synths, especially FM as it can create a lot of glassy and icy sounds. I want glimmer to be a wide genre, so there's no real limitation on techniques."

"In terms of the feel and the atmosphere, I feel like it sounds like a lonely place, neither happy or sad, cold and

numb but also pretty, in an artificial way,"

winterquilt 愛が止ま writes of his own technical interpretation. "Glassy synths, soft pads, lots of little clinky SFX, chimes, tons of reverb."

On glimmer's coming year, Tova is optimistic. She created Index of Refraction Records, a label for hosting the compilation and future glimmer releases. Three EPs are already planned—including *we from vylter* on February 1st—but Tova has grander visions. "I hope that glimmer lives on beyond IOR Records," she says. "When a microgenre is focused around a single label, it tends to die out too easily. A lot of artists have told me they're working on glimmer music, so I'm excited to see what the future brings."

Part of that future will be charted by *winterquilt* 愛が止ま himself, who already has plans to keep the snowy subgenre alive—with a darker evolution. "I hadn't had the feeling vaporwave induced in me since getting into black metal for the first time, like there was something about it that was more than music, a magic of some sort," he says, calling his first EP a warm-up for a new calling. "I knew one day I was going to blend the two, in some form... I felt I was ready to make 'black metal' again, but with this backdrop of vaporwave and glimmer: GRIMMER."

"The result is *hymn*, five tracks and almost 40 minutes of weird, glimmery, vaporish, hard-to-pin-down midi black metal, and I think it's some of my best work," he concludes, adding that he has two similar EPs in the works and no shortage of ideas for creatively intertwining glimmer's boundaries with related genres.

"I also plan on making a dark ambient glimmer record. Black ice?"



News Field Report:

**GEORGE
CLANTON
& CO. GIVE**

**110%
ON TOUR**

PONYDANZA

deliriously...daniel



For a genre birthed from an anonymized internet's most ingenious incubators, vaporwave may not seem immediately conducive to live performances—especially given its iconically hypnotic and uncanny pacing. But as feverish subgenres develop and charismatic producers break out from the Bandcampian underground, it only makes sense for vaporwave music to evolve a stage presence.

While live vapor isn't entirely new, the last year has seen ■ genesis of state and country-spanning tours from the likes of death's dynamic shroud.wmv and Yung Bae. The latter future funkier has even launched a series of shows titled *The Future of Funk*, bringing together the adrenaline-thumping subgenre's best with a lineup boasting Night Tempo's first US visit.

But perhaps the most significant tour as of late has been the 100% Electronica tour. Headlined by label founder and long-time vaporwave darling George Clanton, the tour's seven shows crossed New England and the East Coast—all before Clanton headed west for nine more shows with TV Girl through February. The 100% Electronica lineup assembled many of the two-year old label's biggest names: S U R F I N G, Negative Gemini, Satin Sheets, Clanton's vaporwave alias ESPRIT, and finally the man himself—joined by guest drummer Aaron Shadrow, who opened shows with a solo set of his own.

"I don't know that half of us are vaporwave at all, but I think we've all got some sort of vibe like that: a chill vibe. Hah!" Lindsey French, the artist behind Negative Gemini, said of the lineup. "The common thread running through anything on our label is that it's strong with the melody. Has got to be!"

French co-owns the 100% Electronica label with boyfriend Clanton, and the two have experience assembling tour lineups. Last year, Clanton and Negative Gemini were joined by Equip; this time around, a more sprawling show allowed for different progression of styles.

"Aaron was there to bring the ruckus in the beginning always, then Satin Sheets and ESPRIT did a collaborative set each night. They made new music just for this—it was really special." French adds. "S U R F I N G was just dreamy to see. Negative Gem—I guess I'm there to try and upstage George the best that I can, and then George of course, the final boss: he just tears everyone apart. Always high energy."

Though the tour spanned several states, Negative Gemini only joined for shows in New York, which she says is ■ testament to the tour's ambitious scope.

"S U R F I N G came all the way from Australia, and Satin Sheets came all the way from New Zealand just for this—so it was definitely ■ once in a lifetime type lineup for fans of our label."

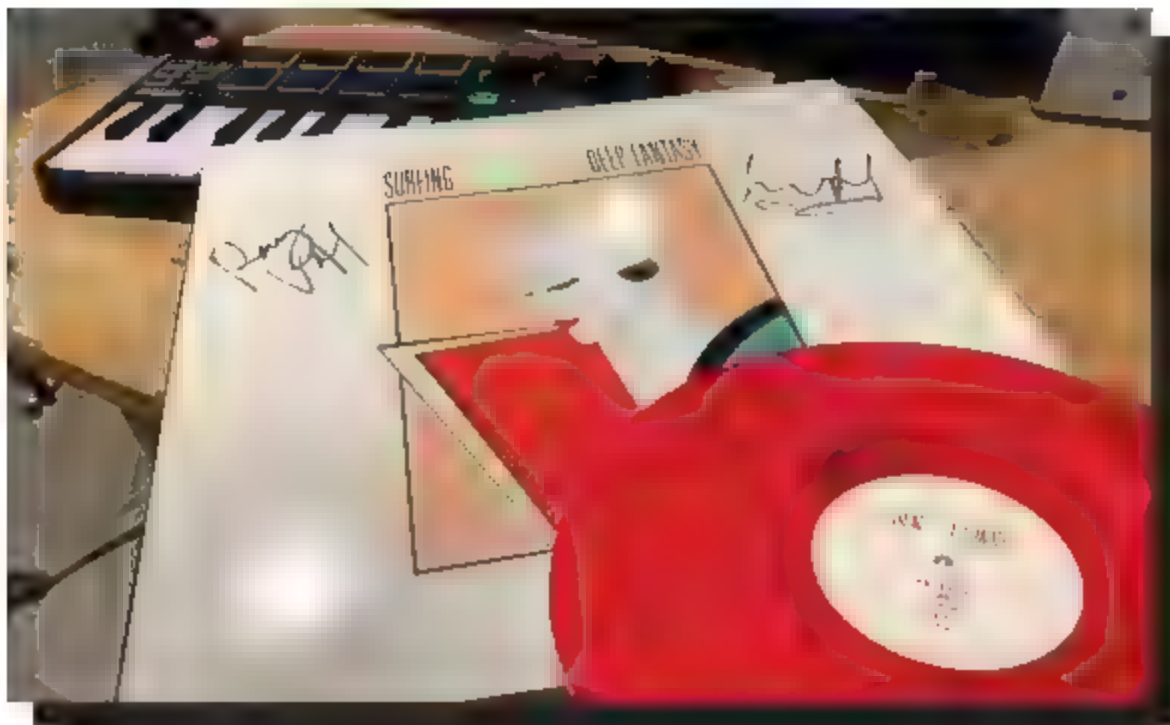
While Clanton's own discography may have evolved beyond vaporwave, into pop and, of course, electronica, the continued presence of vaporwave at his shows attracted Private Suite Magazine's own PONYDANZA, who collected highlights from the tour's January 31 show in Philadelphia.

ALL TOGETHER

Immediately striking was the merch table, where I immediately noticed that sweet, sweet *Deep Fantasy* vinyl¹, among other vapor-wares. It was staffed by George Clanton and his labelmates throughout the night; there was no excess staff to run around and do everything. Clanton would be behind the merch table one minute, then over on stage setting up equipment for the show.

There was very much a community feel to this production, which was quite nice to experience.²

Field Report Cont.



BEGINNINGS

The first act was Aaron Shadrow, whose passionate performance was a great way to kick off the evening. Solid sound and interesting visuals made this a memorable experience. But of course, this wouldn't be the last we would see of Aaron this evening, as he'd be at George's side later in the night.

CLASSICS

Next up were Satin Sheets³ and ESPRIT. The two set up in the middle of the stage and mixed an original composition live, set to some moody visuals being projected behind them. This was the first true "live vaporwave" experience that I had seen, and it was very enjoyable.⁴

DREAMS

I was stoked to finally see S U R F I N G, this iconic vaporwave duo from down under perform live in my hometown, and they certainly put on an inspired show. The live guitar was fantastic, and you can the immense talent it takes to authentically introduce original compositions into vaporwave's traditionally sampled soundscapes.





ELECTRONICA

Finally, wrapping up the evening with the headlining event, was George Clanton. After he and Aaron got settled on stage, they kicked off their set and the whole vibe changed immediately. People were moving, dancing, getting totally into the music. While watching George perform, I definitely can see his raw passion for music. While the crowd was getting into it, he was doing the same, except x¹⁰⁰⁰: putting his entire body and every bit of energy into this performance.

George would jump off the stage and make his way through the crowd, continuing to sing without missing a beat. Most impressive was the fact that he was using a wired microphone without tripping anyone up in the crowd. While he was out in the crowd, mosh pits would form and he was right in there, rhythm unbroken.

George Clanton is a classic showman and seeing him in action is worth it for anyone, whether they are into vaporwave or not.

FINALE

After the performance, George and the rest of the performers were right back behind the merch table, greeting and talking with everyone as they made their way out, further driving home the idea that this show was really about the community and that these guys really appreciate everyone coming out to listen to them do what they love.

¹First released on vinyl in 2016, this vapor contemporary and Incubo predecessor is shipping out again in early March, on transparent teal after a well-received preorder.

²"It's way more fun traveling with a big group," French said of this on-tour community. "All the work gets split up many ways instead of me just doing it all myself. And we just joke and stuff. Actually, there was an awful virus going around the crew—and 4 out of 6 of us were infected, so somebody at any point of the tour was puking and dying. But even despite, morale was high."

³The New Zealand artist's debut release on 100% Electronica, St. Francis, is now over a year (or two) old. Launched on Clanton's label in January 2018, it is a deluxe version of a 2017 *Satin Sheets* release under the alias *Sprite1999*.

⁴French discussed the tour's vaporwave integrations and her own perception of it: "I think what drew me to the genre were the more ambient and beautiful soundscapes within it. I really like some of the instrumentation within the genre, flutes and airy synths and stuff," she said. "I think 100% is down with anything that's wonderfully melodic, or with anything that feels interesting—like it has not been done before."

HOW TO DRESS AESTHETIC WORLDWIDE

Spend enough time in the vaporwave scene—colors, references, feelings—and eventually you may consider, “aesthetic clothes would be awesome!” This, in turn, works one of two ways: you either want to wear them or make them. As the internet birthed vaporwave, so, too, did it birth vaporwave clothing shops. Given that the majority of producers in the scene are based in the US, so are the online stores. If you live outside the US, this can result in heavy shipping costs or conversion fees. Fortunately, though, there are options for vaporwave fans all over the world who want to dress aesthetic from head to toe. Though you can find some vapor gear on the likes of Amazon, in a conscious effort to support the scene, this article will focus on vapor-specific sites. Currency noted will be in USD.

Let's first talk about the most well-known shop, Vapor95, based in Los Angeles. Their website is easy to use, and they offer a wide range of clothes, shoes, and accessories. They've done well promoting the brand, with a strong social media presence, and work with a lot of popular creators (such as Lordess Foudre), whom they feature on their site's Darknet blog. The downside to all of this is their pricing. Of the sites featured here, they are second-most expensive. US buyers who don't reach \$150 in product will pay \$10 for shipping, while it is \$26 to ship to the rest of the world. Sign up for their mailing list, though, and Helios will let you know of any upcoming promotions. This year they had their first “free worldwide shipping” day, of hopefully more to come, as this makes it much more affordable to get your hands on some of their unique designs.

Also based in California, we have Para Palm. This site keeps a strong connection with its fans, and releases new items fairly regularly. The website is easy to use, and their high-quality items are made

to order, just miles down the coast from Vapor95. This level of quality carries a high price tag, but the upside is a flat shipping rate of \$10 (and free shipping for orders over \$150). The owner is very active on social media; he livestreams on Instagram weekly, sharing sitewide discount codes and holding other contests with the audience. Dig around enough and you might find the “Aesthetic Bonus of Luck,” offering further discounts.

The third site out there with a full-body catalog is vaporwavefashion.com. Despite being US-based, they source their products from all over the world, which also results in slightly lower prices. Some of their items are made of different fabric blends, versus the 100% cotton found on other sites, which might put off some of the more discerning shoppers. They do, however, offer great deals on shipping. At the time of writing this article, they have free shipping on their selection of all-over printed items, shoes, backpacks, and mousepads. US orders over \$100, and international orders over \$150, also ship free of charge.

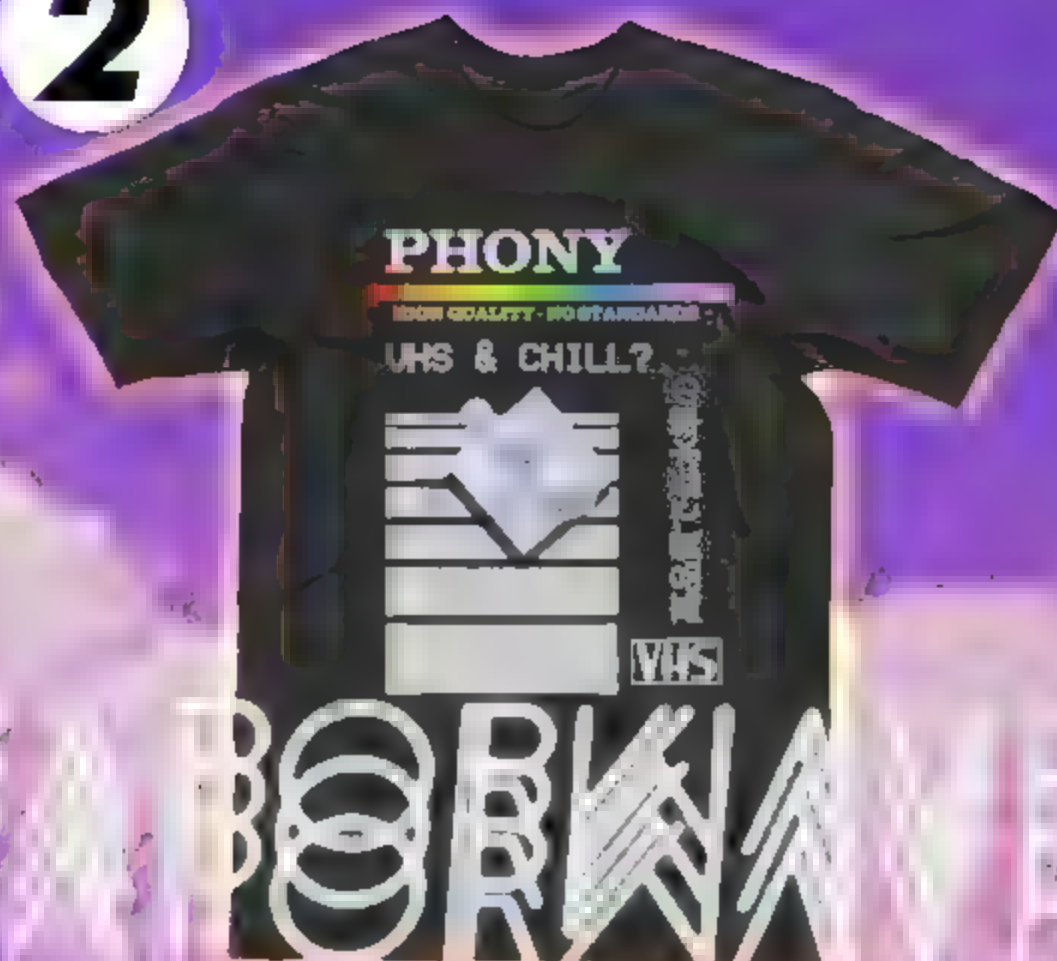
Though the three sites above offer head-to-toe aesthetic options, they're hardly the only sites out there with vaporwave clothing. Other great independent stores, each with their own original, branded material, include newold.club, ishiharadesign.com, and publicspace.xyz. You can also find a large selection of t-shirts on sites like teespring and redbubble, but those may not have as unique designs as the other sites mentioned above.

So, even though the majority of shoppers are in the US, there are plenty of options for vaporwave fans worldwide to find something to suit their taste. It's recommended to sign up for the email lists for the sites above to make sure you can catch any sales or promotions when they occur. Now that you know where to find your clothing out there in the virtual plaza, you can go fill your carts and dress aesthetic.

1



2



PARA PALM

3



4



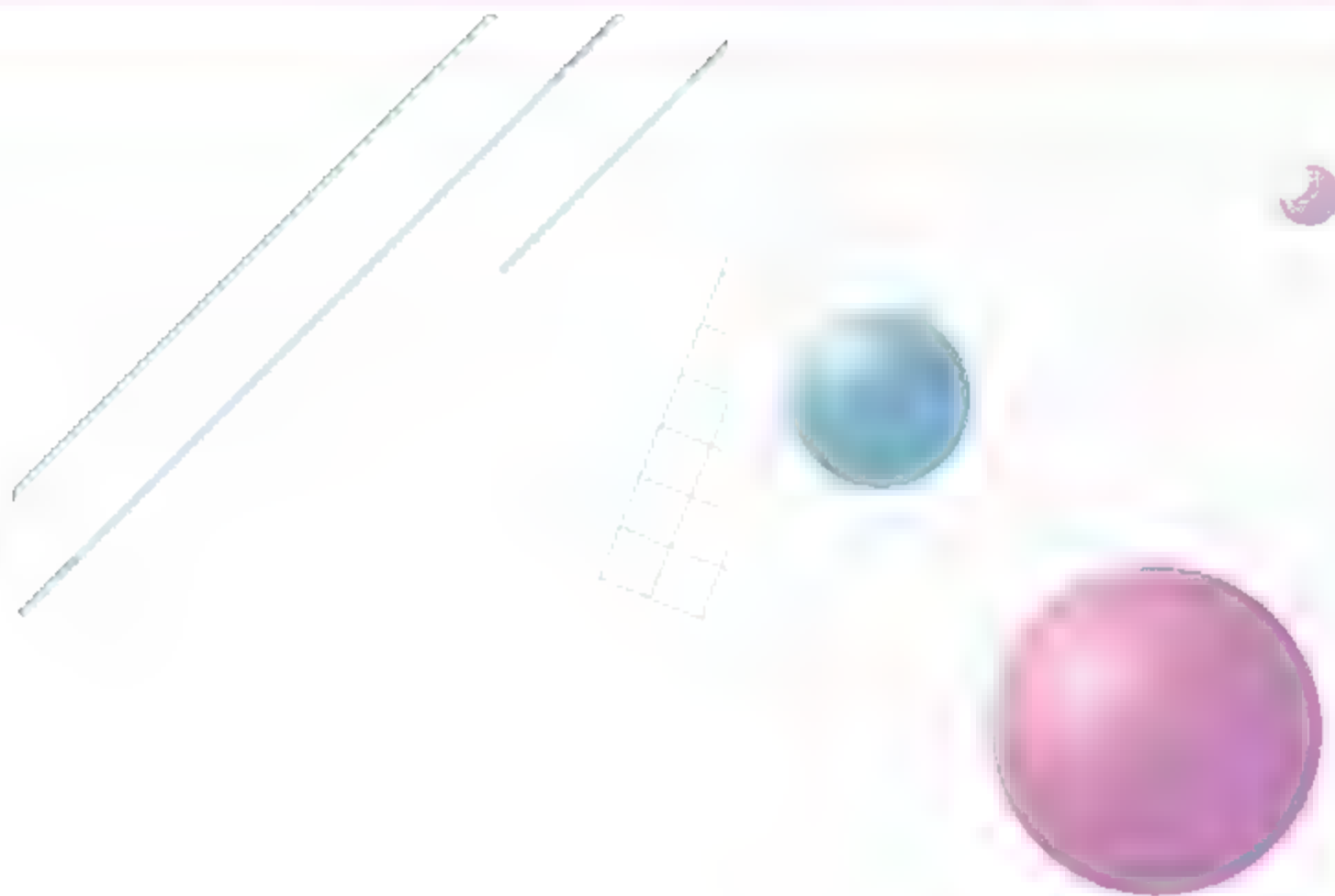
REDBUBBLE

VOLUME 1

{HERE}

A SMALL SOFT

DIRECTORY



Mallsoft. The word itself has a pleasant lull. The culmination of the ironically juxtaposed softness of a consumer area, bleached into calm reverberation, warped and spliced by both time and technology. Recycling what would otherwise be the noise of a forgotten point in spacetime, mallsoft is a perfect reflection of the identity of vaporwave. Primarily known for its use of the ambience and aesthetics of an abandoned mall, it is also identified by its sardonic interpretation of late-state consumer-capitalism and its irony and acceptance of a virtual and long-forgotten identity.

From the early days exploring *Hologram Plaza*, through the Korean market of 슈퍼마켓 Yes! We're Open, and onto the genre-defining *Palm Mall*, mallsoft has come into its own as a respected and well-liked subgenre of the vaporwave movement. The directory presented here will guide you through fan, PSM staff, and Patron mallsoft favorites. By no means a definitive guide, this is a great place to start if you want to spend some time getting lost in the mall.

Forever
Various Artists
A wonderful foray into the community's idea of what mallsoft means to them.

Sparkling Water
*desert sand feels warm at night
Your feet are tired from bargain hunting. Grab a drink, take a seat, and refresh yourself.*

Hologram Plaza
Disconscious
The mall may be empty, but the music sure is not.

Welcome To Crystal Valley Mall
(DMT-170)
モーション/FUTURE/PAST
Sunnier, prismatic mallsoft with the aging, Golden Years feel.



High Fashion
Leisure Centre
*Staff suggestion from deliriously...daniel,
"These commercial soundscapes are blissful and ethereally transportive."*

Mall Alone
NightSwim
What you'd expect to run through an urban explorer's head as they're strolling through a vacant mall.

A Place Where The Light Is Silent
385north
Nestled away and distant, yet commanding attention.

Shopping With Bae?
Neon Tiger
As dreamy as holding
your lover's hand.

セミナー
blue_ΔCID
Thanks for joining us! Let us have 25
minutes of your time. We're sure you'll be
pleased with the results!



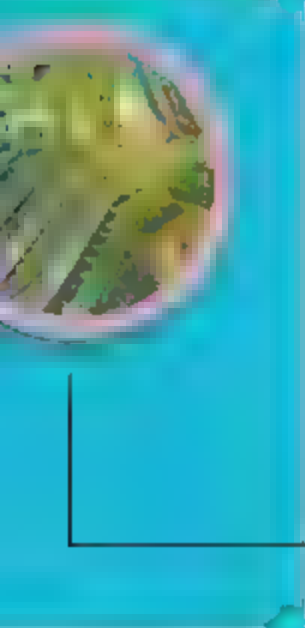
Floor 1



Palm Mall
■ シ Corp.
Available in ■ wide variety of colors
and sizes, this must-have fits well in
any discerning fan's collection. Price
and availability may vary.



大理石のファンタジー
haircuts for men
Patron KingPing calls it mallsoft
with a kick - "I pay attention to
every beat and note."



Paradise Mall
Halcyon Retail
Recommended by Patron OutRun 真夜中,
"It reminds me of a local mall I visited
growing up, mixing with my own personal
nostalgia."

夏空気 Summer Atmosphere
Zadig the Jasp
Slow down your powerwalk this morning with some
light and airy jazz.

00 色と概念

MiraiCult

*Classy and evocative of
a late night romp into the
land of consumerism.*

Welcome to the Craft Store!®

nofriendsonline

*Short on fabric, glue sticks, or
mallsoft? We know a place.*

Summer At The Citadel

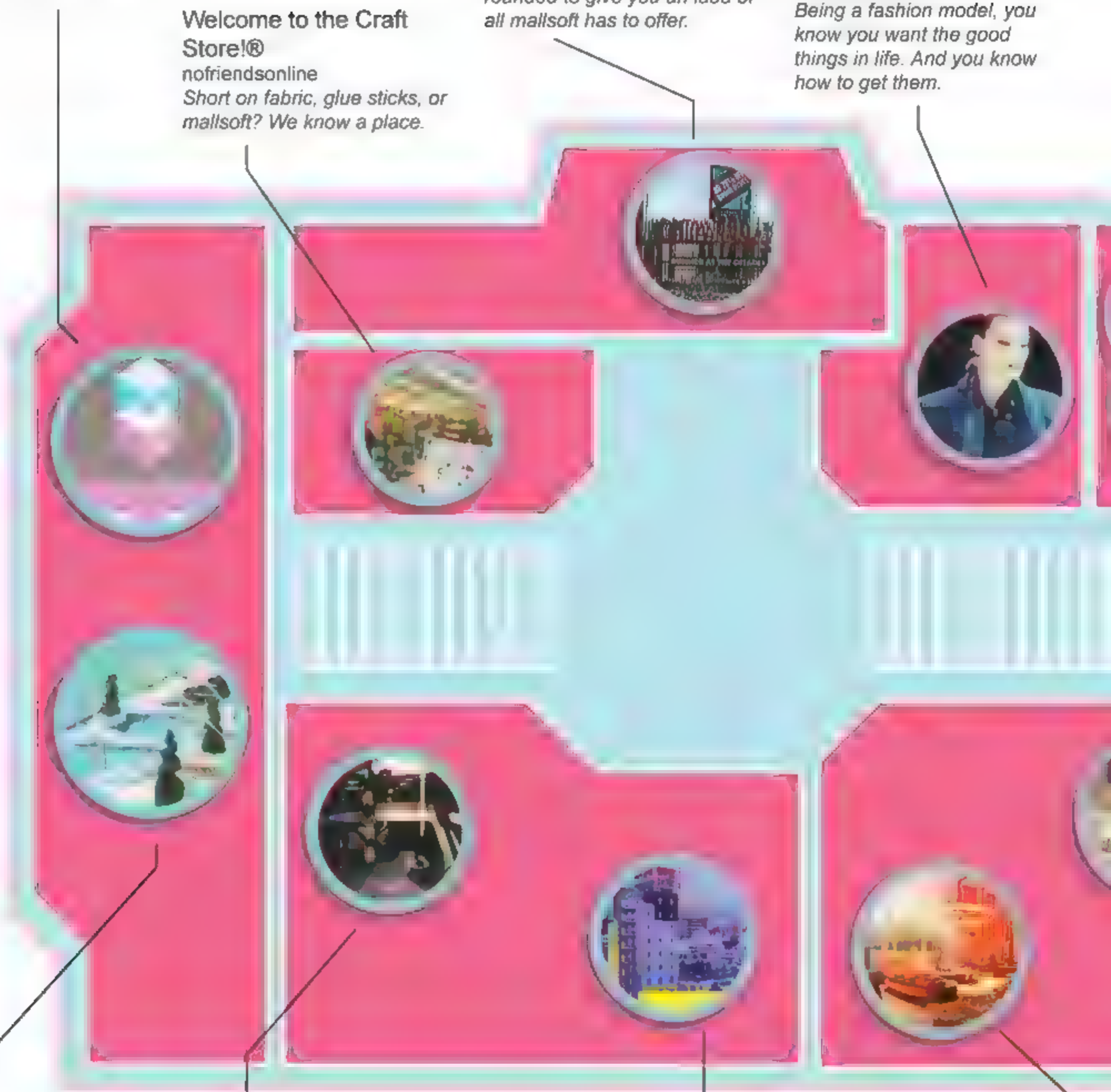
TVVIN_PINEZ_M4LL

*Carefully sculpted and well
rounded to give you an idea of
all mallsoft has to offer.*

the catwalk

lucid beach85'

*Being a fashion model, you
know you want the good
things in life. And you know
how to get them.*



Lounge Atmospheres

Trademarks & Copyrights

*It's like Sade's secret
mallsoft baby.*

Vacant Places

Hantasi

Patron キラヨシ [KIRAYOSHI]

*loves the layers of meaning
behind its construction, Patron
Adoray likes the royal feel.*

Elevators

sendai tennis

*80's shopping
nostalgia never felt
so right. Going up?*

ベルベットファンタジー

ベルベット73-95

Drift away to a shopping holiday with smooth, silky sax loops and thick basslines.

Venus Virtual Plaza

夢AEON // FOTOshoppe's

This collaborative take on mallsoft will have you wishing you had all the money in the world to spend at Venus Virtual.



Floor 2

Izakaya観光客

Zima Clearmalt

Plunky and dreamy, like an arcade adventure come to life.

Shopper's Delight

Aristotle's Hard Drive

Staff choice of sheep - "if any other albums left you wondering 'what is mallsoft?' look no further."

CLIMATE グローバル

シルクPANG EA

Patron KingPing calls it a mall quite literally frozen in time with a theme that is distinct and fresh.

슈퍼마켓Yes! We're Open

식료품groceries

Welcome!

Platinum Card

Hypermarket

Leave your money woes behind - put it on the card, and get lost in endless shopping.

Luxury Hotel, 3AM

Princess Commodore 64

If shopping had a guided meditation, this would be it.





Dead Mall TOURS

Kristin Rose (Unicomm Productions)
WRITER & PHOTOGRAPHY

cross the threshold of a department store and the fragrance of Italian designers' dreams wafts into my nose. A mosaic of checkered marble tiles stretches before me, reflecting a mélange of neon, dulled and faintly glowing. The bright, prismatic glare of sunlight through a geometric skylight mixes with the echo of the latest soft-pop hit over a network of saucer-sized speakers. In the face of the retail apocalypse, I explore the empty husks of these once-bustling temples of commerce to capture what remains. I am drawn in simultaneously by a sense of wonder and megalophobia, hearing the echoes of what is and what was.

My interest in dying malls surfaced organically. I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, home of what may be the most infamously dead mall in the United States: Forest Fair Mall. The mall opened in 1989, when I was seven years old, and it was my favorite place in the world. It featured an amusement park, a miniature golf course, and a movie theater. It was, however, far too "upscale" for its neighborhood. Within a year, the developer and his company had filed for bankruptcy, leaving the mall half empty. The following years saw several attempts to revive or reinvent Forest Fair, but to no avail. It contains 203 retail spaces; currently, only four are occupied. Crumbling signs advertise shops and attractions that are no longer. The arcade, at least, is open until midnight on the weekends, leaving the vacant corridors open to wanderers, only failing neon lighting the way.





Seeking to revisit my memories of what Forest Fair looked like when I was young, I discovered DeadMalls.com. It's full of articles and photos of malls just like mine—buildings sitting vacant, frozen in time. I spent days reading stories and looking at eerie, beautiful photos of column-flanked storefronts with cagelike gates closed forever, of baby pink tile stylishly bordered by black grout, of empty tubes of glass that once glowed green and blue, of signs advertising junk food that will never again be served.

As I continued browsing, I found entire communities holding onto this feeling of saudade. And I knew I wanted to be a part of them. After taking several months to muster the courage (and a few ill-fated attempts at filming alone), my boyfriend and I created our first video about Forest Fair Mall, featuring tracks from Breeze, Infinity Frequencies, and Aroma Virtual. We started our channel, Unicomm Productions (the name ■ combination of “unicorn,” for my then-bubblegum pink hair, and “communications,” for my boyfriend’s industry) in June of 2018. Now we aim to release dead mall videos biweekly.





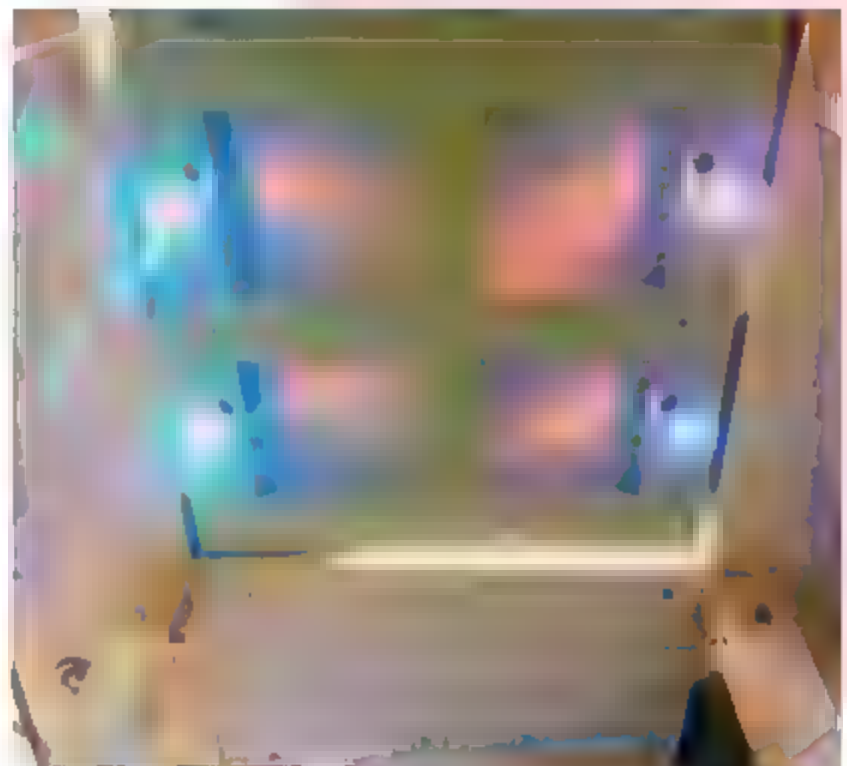
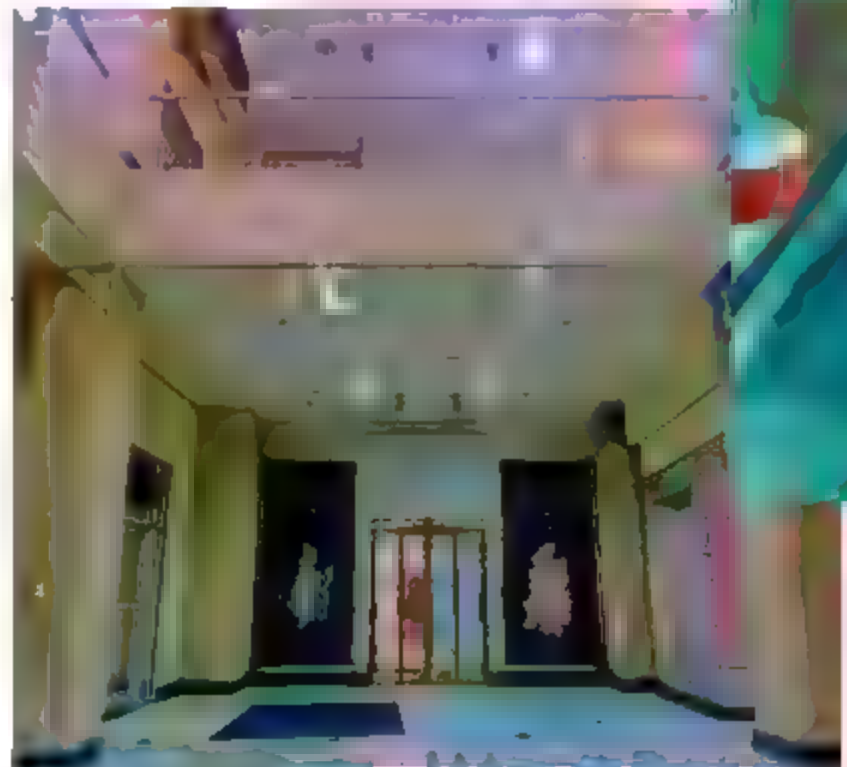
We have more than enough targets to keep us busy for quite some time, and each trip reveals the idiosyncrasies of our own nostalgia. While reviewing footage from our third or fourth excursion, we discovered that we tend toward what we've come to affectionately call "skylight porn." There really is nothing quite like a bright, clear sky reflecting through those prismatic panes. Mall architecture is striking—once all the visual noise has been cleared away only bare skeleton remains. The passages, once littered with kiosks offering Proactiv Solutions, nail buffing kits, and self-

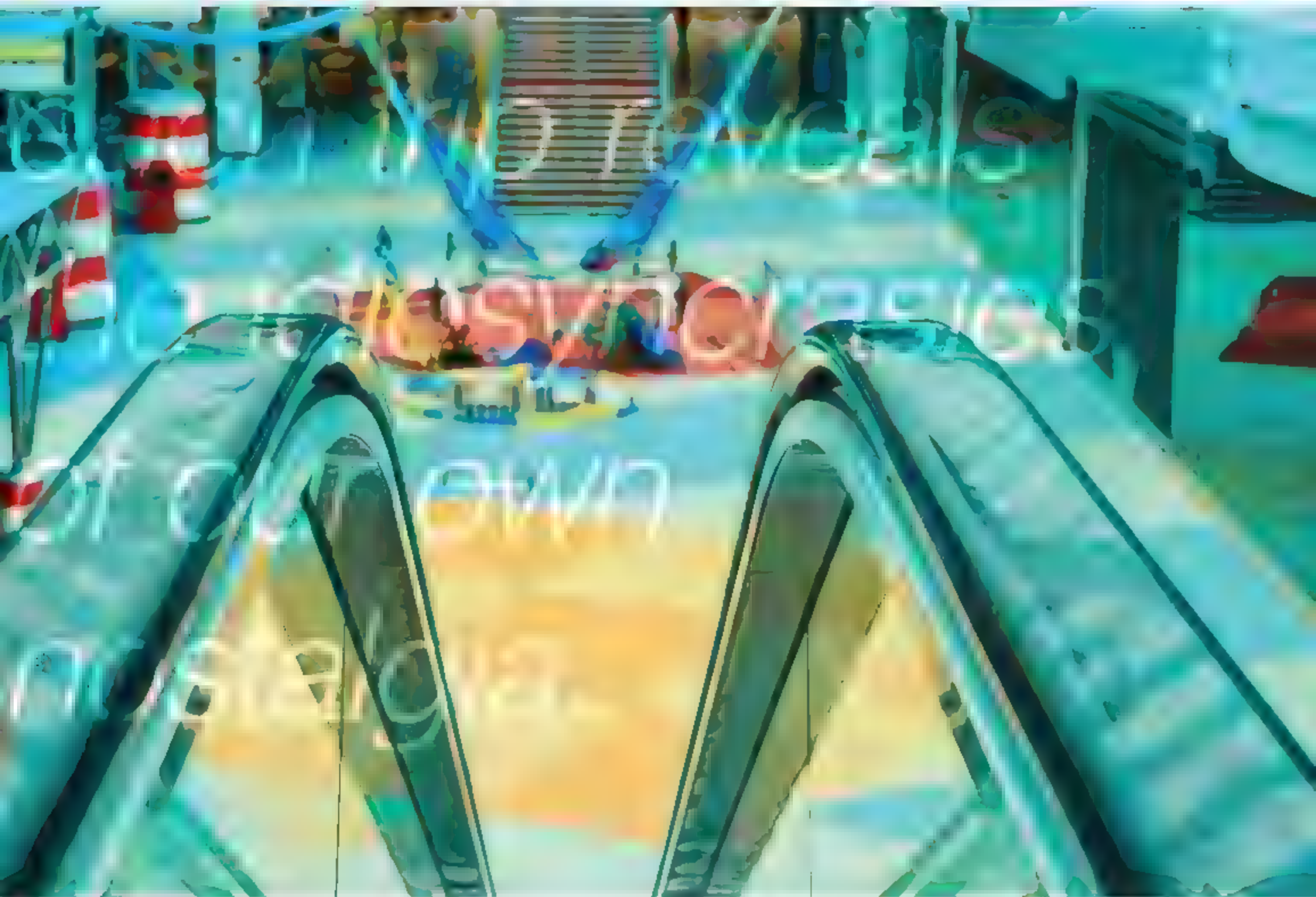
propelled toy planes are now clear, showcasing marble floors full of glinting sunlight. Fountains, once a prominent centerpiece of so many mall courtyards, are simply too costly to maintain as business declines, so most of them have been drained or removed. But even empty, the scent of bromine remains, conjuring memories of an amusement park boat ride.

We use a variety of equipment to film dead or dying malls, and what we choose depends on the level of security we plan to encounter. Since many malls have a written or posted policy prohibiting filming, we do most of our filming using an DJI Osmo Pocket (a camera with an integrated gimbal) for a bit of discretion. In settings where security isn't an issue, we also use ■ Sony Alpha A33, ■ DSLR-like translucent mirror camera with interchangeable lenses. Our goal while filming is to make viewers feel like they're right beside us, walking the empty corridors.

Once we've shot the footage, we edit and produce final videos in Adobe Premiere, then use Adobe Audition to record and edit the narration and soundtrack. I research a mall's past and future before working on a script. Always interesting to me is the cause of a mall's closure; some are telegraphed more clearly than others in hindsight. And we take the act of selecting music seriously. I always aim to make the soundtrack fit the venue. For example, Century III Mall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania., is a big, white stone structure with a mostly-blue color palette, so we chose Eco Virtual's cool, breezy vibe to accent the bright light. For ■ mall like Towne Mall Galleria in Middletown Ohio, an early 80's relic with warm brown pebbled columns and darker lighting, we used tracks from Kodak Cameo's *Riviera* album, the warmth of its faux-glamorous horns evoking the end of the disco era. For

Upper Valley Mall, a desolate, well-preserved mall in Springfield, Ohio, that began its decline in the late 80s, I created my own mallsoft track for background music, using "Going Home" by Kenny G as the basis. I chose this track because it has become the unofficial theme of "closing time" at many malls in China, and it was appropriate for ■ mall whose permanent closing time is all but imminent.





I've tried to explain my hobby to people outside the subculture, but most don't understand why I visit empty malls or why anyone would want to watch me visiting them. I always describe it as Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response for mallrats: the best videos are the ones that let you smell the Cinnabon and Dior Poison as you're watching, that convince you you're there to

meet someone new, that make your hands tingle a bit with anticipation.

The sound of mallsoft is that old Muzak echoing through your brain—a sound you never thought you'd find nostalgic but suddenly do, in spite of finding those old tunes about lost love annoying. When you were a teenager, you couldn't imagine ■ future where you would

ever feel that way, but here you are, pining for a past that never happened and a future that may never be. You can join us here as we document what is, what remains, and what has been. Meet us at the food court. Just be sure to pack a lunch.

For more journeys into mall nostalgia :
youtube.com/c/unicorinproductions

when nothing else will do



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bl00d wave



Testamorta

2014.11.11

Photography by: Chiara Canestri



Active since 2013, it was 2014's *Hotel Vibes* that placed Italian producer bl00dwave firmly on the shortlist of revered vaporwave artists. This year he plans to show us more of what he's really made of. We met up for a chat in Rome, in the shadow of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. From the roof, ancient marble statues set against ■ clear sky gave their blessing to our meeting.

First things first, a question people can't stop asking: where does the name bl00dwave come from?

I realized what the name really meant to me some time after I invented it. At the beginning I was looking for a cool name with "wave" in it, something that would refer to vaporwave in some way while still being distinct. I decided then to add "bl00d" because I thought the two words would pair nicely together, and I liked the 00s to make it a little bit more peculiar. After a while I realized that what I do with my music is express myself, from within, and that's when bl00dwave took a more literal meaning for me—the lifeblood running inside my veins, which really drives me and which I aim to translate into music when I produce. When I work on a track I draw from my feelings and emotions, so I know now that bl00dwave represents me 100%.



You started producing quite at an early stage of vaporwave. How did you get into it?

It happened upon it completely by chance, no one introduced me to it. In 2012 I used to listen to a lot of different music on SoundCloud—I had just discovered witch house and seapunk at that time—when I finally got to listen to vaporwave and it really struck a chord. Short answer: thanks to other alternative genres.

Is it the first kind of music you tried producing?

Before that I had tried to make generic electronic music, without much conviction. I'd use Magic Music Maker, a basic program with default sounds, because I just wanted to start creating something, I was a super-noob. Then I found out about vaporwave and things got a bit more serious; I instantly felt a deep connection with the genre, a strong emotional reaction. It made me recall childhood memories, random scenes from my past, abstract images that I wouldn't be able to place; almost like visual representations of my feelings, mostly melancholy and nostalgia of course.

What programs and gear do you use?

At the moment I use Ableton with an Akai midi keyboard.

the lifeblood running inside my veins...

What would you consider your best and worst albums?

If we're talking strictly vaporwave, in that the album is 100% sample based, I'd say the best one is *Hotel Vibes*, simply for everything that has happened as a result. The cassettes sold out in almost half an hour and I was so surprised and got so proud that I kinda feel obliged to call it my best album. But if we talk about production, music composition and feelings, I'm not that sure, I really gotta think about it... Can I answer later?

Sure, take your time.

The worst one is easier though, definitely my first one: *Dream*. It's where it all started and I'm attached to it, but when I listen to the production, how it was conceived even, it is way too messy. I can clearly spot every flaw in it.

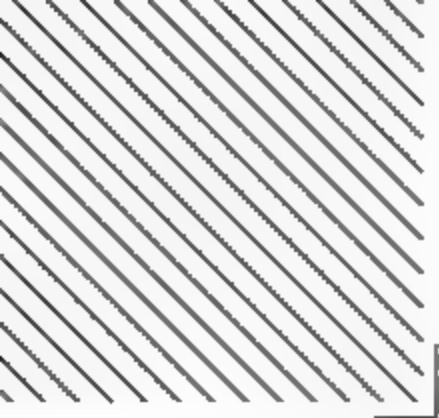
What's your favourite vaporwave album and label?

That's a hard one, there are so many good albums out there! Let's see... I'll go with *world class* by luxury elite, it stayed in my rotation loop forever, I used to listen to it a lot.

Favourite label is Business Casual, hands down. The quality of their physical releases is always good, the owner is always friendly, and gives everybody motivation to work on new projects. He gets you involved; he was the one who suggested we do the three album box [BIZBOX #9 - Ed.] that went out years ago, and he also releases posters and compilations.

Do you collect CD, vinyl or cassettes?

I collect CDs, not necessarily vaporwave, but yes I still buy CDs.



What advice would you give to someone who's just getting into the genre and wants to start producing vaporwave?

I think the best reason for someone to do anything is when they find they have a deep connection with it, when they are moved by feelings, whatever they may be, by a passion that is almost like a need. If that's the case, I say do not hesitate and do it. Believe in what you are doing and in some unexpected ways you're sure to succeed. Ask yourself why you want to make vaporwave. If your honest answer is because it's trendy, because you want to be part of the scene, or because you want to have some visibility and see how things go, then I think you should focus on something else.

In classic vaporwave, sample choice is paramount. I listened to a shitload of music to release each one of my albums, and that's how I discovered and started appreciating '80s music. I'd say you gotta spend most of your time searching for the right sample, the one that really speaks to you, and when you find it you must justify your choice, you have to make clear why you chose that particular cut; sometimes a good title is all you need, a well thought-out title can really make a difference.

Why did you decide to produce sample-free music?

Because I evolved, basically. My music, creative mind, and production abilities have all evolved. I learned to produce original tracks, and if I can create something from nothing it means I'm also gonna put even more of myself into it. That really makes me feel like the track is mine. At the end of the day the process to make a vaporwave track from a sample is pretty simple, you slow it down, lower the pitch, add the reverberation, and you're nearly done. What really matters in that case, as I said before, is why are you making that track, why are you using that sample, what do you want to achieve? It really doesn't take much time, the hard part is to conceptualize it, not to produce it. But since I feel more mature, musically and otherwise, I find working without samples more rewarding.

How did it feel when Hotel Vibes first came out on Business Casual back in 2014?

Initially I sent Business Casual an application to work with them and John replied saying why not. It was the beginning of 2014 and *Dream* got published, only digital. As I mentioned, I wasn't entirely satisfied with it, but people did like it and I'm sure the fact that it was on Business Casual must have played a role. After that, John reached out to me with the idea of releasing *Hotel Vibes* on cassette, as I had told him I was working on a new album. Eventually the album released both in digital and cassette, and they sold out in no time. That was a real turning point for me. When I realized that people had rushed to get their hands on the cassette, my motivation got boosted like never before, and John and I made other cassettes and other projects together. I can safely say if things had not gone like that, I wouldn't have produced music with so much commitment. *Hotel Vibes* is still the most popular album of mine.

Any considerations on the future of the genre?

I feel like there's going to be so many artists that things will get much more confused at some point. Over time it's become a phenomenon that attracts many people not just for the music but for fashion as well, and that is something to take in consideration, be it positive or negative. Vaporwave is a peculiar genre, I have a very personal take on it: to me it's meant for the individual. Everyone's mind is free to go all sorts of different places while listening to the same track, therefore I believe vaporwave is better appreciated when alone. With the attached aesthetic, with its images and visual art in general, it has become more popular on the internet and from there to more mainstream channels, which is fine.

In any case, I do believe vaporwave is bound to stay, though not necessarily as a genre of music, because music is the most demanding part of it; vaporwave music is not easily appreciated. I know many people that know what vaporwave means, but they associate it with images only, statues and virtual things, which is ok, but it's also music. It was born as a music genre, but they don't listen to it and at times are not even aware of it. In my opinion it will last as an aesthetic versus music, also because it evolved a lot over time and it's now hard to define.

I do believe vaporwave is bound to stay, though not necessarily as a genre of music, because music is the most demanding part of it; vaporwave music is not easily appreciated



Any thoughts on the Italian scene, if you think there is one at all?

There is an Italian scene actually, born quite some years ago thanks to QuadratoX, who pushed many gigs and events. It is a lively scene but also very much underground, and not too well organized, even though we all collaborate a lot with each other. Lately there has been Tataki Records trying to give it a boost, but I personally only listen to QuadratoX. In this country the general tendency of vaporwave is to lean towards experimental music that I never fully explored.

It's been almost a year since EGO. You wouldn't happen to have any news to share with us on a new release, would you?

I do actually! I'm currently collaborating with a friend of mine, who in some ways will be the co-producer of the new album, as he gives me a hand with the production process. He helps me give a finishing touch to the tracks, and assists me with the mastering and some sound selection. The album is still mine, however, not ■ split, and it should come out at the end of March, early April maybe.

I'm working on a new sound, meaning there's going to be a bit of *Distance* (synthwave/'80s) and a bit of *EGO* (more modern and chill), but it's definitely going to be something different from both, oriented on a retro sound, at times poppy and easy to listen, other times angry, bordering on noise music.

In general, it will be even more concept-driven than *EGO*. I'm going to be at the very center of the album once again, because it sprouted from the inspiration I got from everything I've been through during the last

year and a half. I have changed as ■ person so I know as a fact my music inspiration has changed as well. I wrote all the lyrics for the album and I'm also going to sing them myself. Sexuality is one of the topic at its core, because after coming out my life has changed, therefore it's the product of that as well, it's the topic of many many titles and lyrics. It's a liberating record, and that's why it's pop, because I wanted to unload; for the first time with my music I really feel like I'm doing whatever the fuck I want. It's like, in some ways, the product of an escape from the maze, and that's the reason there are also some kinda obscure parts, because finding the exit hasn't been easy at all.

The album is called *Afterglow* and will be released very soon.



Can't wait to get my hands on it. Any other projects you're working on?

I have been taking pictures; all self-portraits. I show my face now, it's all part of the mentality switch I had, the change of inspiration. I don't want to hide anymore, in part because I kind of drifted away from the classic vaporwave mindset, in part because I evolved as a person and as an artist, as every artist should. This thing started with *EGO*, when I did the shoot for the album with all those pictures of me with flowers, and it hasn't stopped since. I'm also planning to do some photo shoots, perhaps with some photographer friends, focused on myself, to post them on Instagram and the like. This is another way for me to express what I have inside, perfectly in line with my name.

Thanks for taking the time to chat with us. Can we get back to your answer about your best album?

Oh, here I thought you forgot! It's hard. Ok, I'd say *Distance*. Let's wrap up before I change my mind.

*Afterglow will be released
in early 2024 through
Bisexuals, Les, Bi, and Gay
cassette and CD*

BROWSER HISTORY

WRITER: MARK

<part: 1>

The greatest thing about time is that it doesn't exist.

That's the last thing I remember Graph telling me before I dropped back in. A fix is a fix, right? Whenever a new piece of gear came out, he had it. Usually with a bit of aftermarket kitz, even. And this—well, this was something else entirely.

Tech had come such a long way, especially the past fifty years or so, but consumer use has always been just so tentative, so pedestrian. I remember reading how people were so worried about an internet of things, way back. It was ironic, really—worrying about your thermostat tracking your voice and all, while you walk around with your whole life on a thin black slab of glass and metal, broadcasting your workout progress and dinner party menu for feed recipients from who-knows-where.

So, Graph, he tells me about this newest lens. Not really a lens, but you'll see what I mean. Smart contacts, they're all well and good, but this thing fell right off, waving at his buddies up at the top of the ledge. Some Korean company, they'd built this new gear, they called Orbs. Ocular Renaissance Build System. It's a complete eye replacement, and then some. You get your typical readouts—temperature, forecast, scores, map overlay, singles, all that. But here's where it separates from the pack—when they replace your eye with the orbs, rather than connecting traditionally, a pod of nanos builds into place as the connection itself. Smart lenses were just putting a pretty browser in your eye. This was finally the beginning of real bioaware.

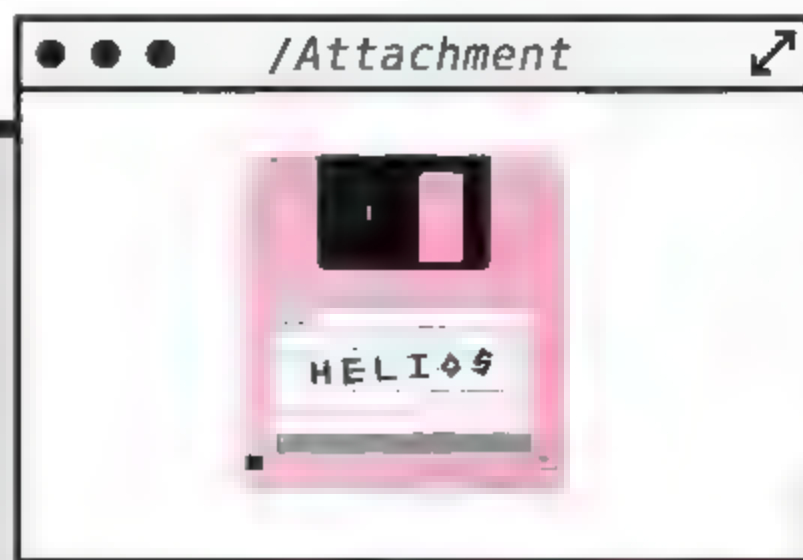
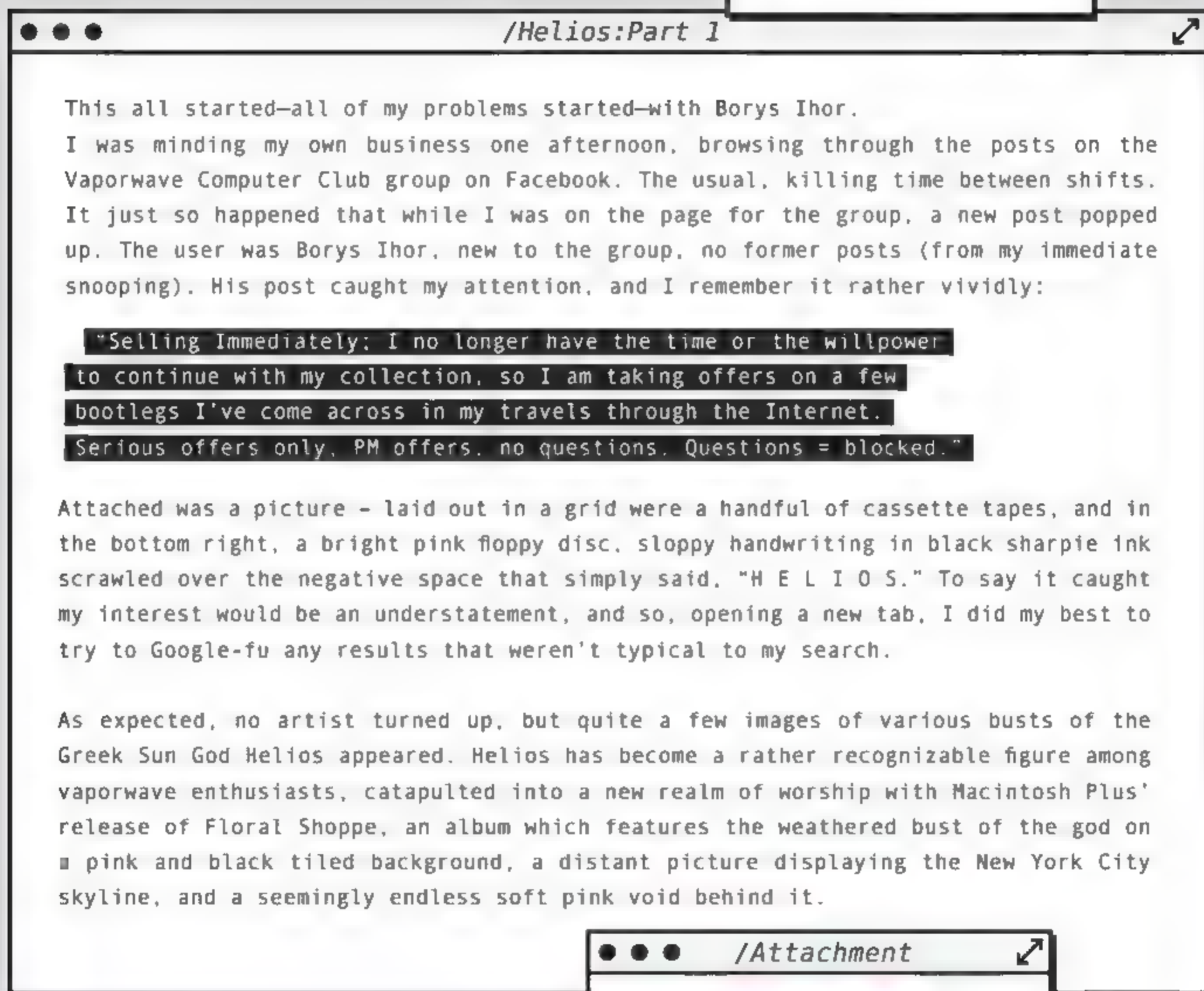
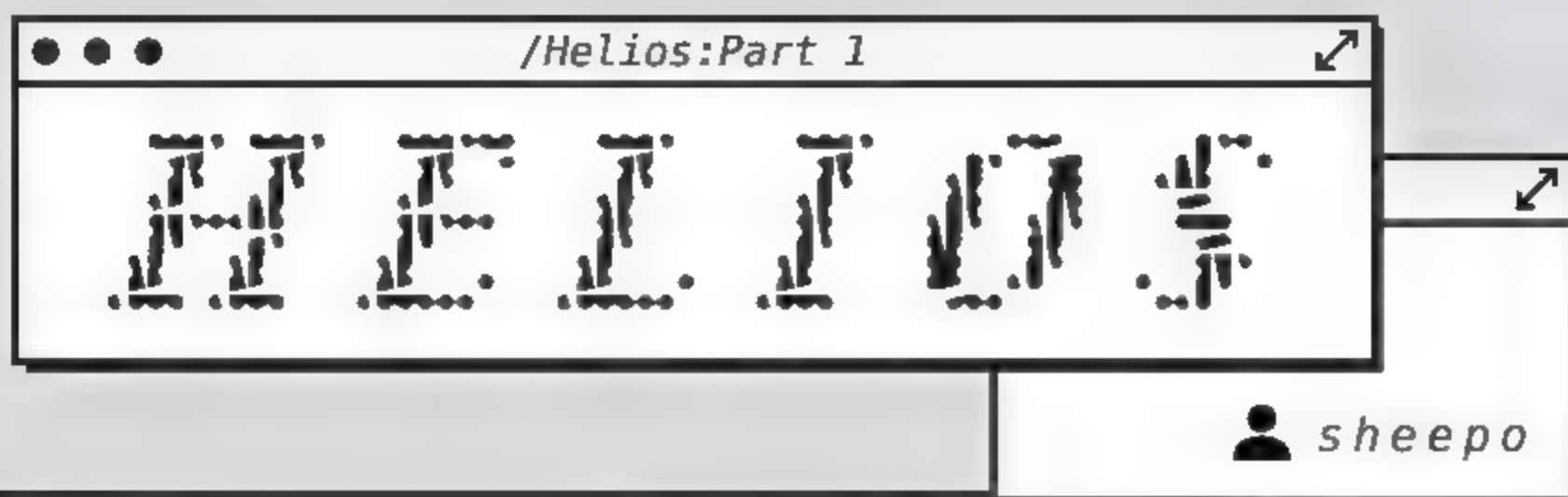
Graph got hold of it right near release, and had his guys working on a way to amp it up even further. Now, keep in mind that, with orbs, you could close your eyes and effectively browse away, anywhere, virtually. So, his crew, they got to thinking—what if they could expand on this, essentially VR, always-on browsing experience?

Being one step ahead, they managed to backsolve a build for an epidermal lacing that, combined with the orbs, could truly make you feel like you were anywhere. And it did. Now, where to begin?





EMMY



Still curious after my fruitless search, and with spare scratch at the time, I sent Borys a PM.

I started by telling him that I was interested in the Helios floppy, and offered him fifteen dollars for it. No sooner than I had sent my message to him did I see he had read my message. I waited with bated breath as Facebook Messenger indicated that Borys was typing, and I hoped to god that he was writing that the disc was still available. I'd never caught a sale at the right time, and I was always looking for an opportunity to add something rare to my collection.

Borys responded that yes, Helios was still available, but that there was little incentive to ship for fifteen dollars from Russia, that if I could make it twenty-five, we would have a deal. It was a bit of a gamble for me, yet after only a moment to mull it over, I agreed to his price. We exchanged information, I paid him for the floppy, and that was that.

I made sure to comment on the post, so that I'd be notified later on any other activity in the thread. I like to keep track of who attempts to snag what - it comes in handy if I decide later on that I absolutely needed something that I had passed on; typical window shopper's remorse was very familiar to me.

The next day however, the post was deleted, and there was no trace of Borys Ihor anywhere on Facebook. Just my luck, I thought, immediately assuming I'd been scammed out of my twenty-five bucks and very sourly wishing that Borys was having fun with it - obviously he needed it more than I did. The experience left a bad taste in my mouth and I logged off, thinking nothing of it. I got ready for work, went about business as usual. The thought of the Helios floppy sat on the back burner in my mind, along with the various other stresses I'd put there to boil over at some point in the future.

Later that day, during break, I checked my paypal account, and verified that Borys had taken my payment, so I sent him an email.

Email:Bo.lhor@*****.net

To: Bo.lhor@*****.net
From: plutoneedsasquad@gmail.com
Subject: HELIOS Floppy

Borys -

Hi there, this is Carl from the Vaporwave Computer Club group; we spoke on Facebook but it seems that your account was wiped entirely from the site. I'm just writing to inquire on a tracking number for the floppy, and to verify that it will still be shipped. No rush, just concerned considering how it all looks.
Hope you're well, and have a great evening.

Cheers,
Carl

/Helios:Part 1

I'd be lying if I said I didn't check my phone eagerly every time it went off after that point. For the rest of the day, my shift seemed to drag on, leaving me in this odd limbo of ambiguity as to whether or not this floppy that I had ordered, the contents of which I had no idea what they even were, would even make it to me. As I clocked out a few hours later, I received the awaited notification that Borys Ihor had responded to my email.

Sitting in the parking garage I opened the reply, and was greeted with nothing but the tracking number for my parcel. From the looks of it, Borys had already shipped it express, and I honestly felt bad for assuming that he had intended to scam me out of twenty-five dollars.

In a couple days' time, I arrived home from another mundane shift of data entry to see that my parcel had arrived safe and sound, and was sitting on my doorstep. To be honest, I had been looking forward to it - the week was off to a lousy start, and a little bit of mail waiting for me always bolstered my spirits. I stood on my stoop and tore open the shipping box, tiny as it was. Inside I found the curious pink floppy, and a piece of folded paper.

I opened it to find a memo from Borys:

я свободен . THANK YOU . я извиняюсь .

And that was it. Shrugging, I tossed the contents of the box minus the electric pink floppy into the recycling bin, unlocked the door and eagerly hustled to my desktop.

In the days preceding the parcel's arrival I had fished out my external floppy drive and had gotten it set up and ready to receive the new addition to my collection. Sitting down at my desk, I eagerly, yet carefully loaded the disc into the drive. The moment was finally upon me, and as the disc read, I felt excitement akin to what I imagine one feels at the roulette table. Thrill ran through me as the window containing the data for the disc popped up on my monitor.

When I observed the contents for what they were at face value, one could say I was disappointed. "Twenty five bucks for this?" I muttered to myself as the monitor's light illuminated my face. Rubbing my eyes, I reached over and turned on my desk lamp, with a labored sigh. "Right then, no worries." I skimmed the files, but the file names were in what I presumed to be Russian. The audio file was titled Лайза. Alongside it, the text for the image caught my eye, КАПТИВА. Written in all caps, it seemed to be rather urgent, demanding to be seen. There was also a file for WordPad, and when I clicked to open it, an error message let me know the file was corrupted. Already this was off to a bad start and so, I abstained for a moment to open up the audio file, placing my headphones over my ears.

That was a mistake. Honestly, at that moment, I realized purchasing this floppy was a mistake. As the file loaded, I was greeted with some odd, corrupted version of Macintosh Plus' "Lisa Frank 420" - it had been slowed down, as far as my ear could discern. There was an odd reverb over the track, and flange, and what sounded to be cries. As I continued to listen with furrowed brow it almost sounded like the song was playing in reverse, but I could pick out the iconic "Don't say no." I don't know why I wasn't surprised, but for the entirety of the nine minutes and eighteen seconds of the track, I listened to it. About midway through, I began to feel nauseous; perhaps this was disappointment, and a long day of punching in data without a break.

I took off my headphones and set them aside, standing from my desk. "Might as well," I sighed, hovering my mouse over the image file. As I clicked on it to open it, the computer crashed, a blue screen illuminating the room. "Jesus Christ, really?" I groaned, unwilling to immediately deal with my computer. I was cranky and hungry, and so I assured my machine that I'd return to it after dinner and have it up and running again.

This is where things got weird. No, in retrospect, things got weird when I reached out to Borys. Things got weird when Borys posted into the Vaporwave Computer Club that he was selling his collection under the guise of having no time left. Maybe his time really had run out...

/Helios:Part 1

After dinner, I began the task of getting my rig back up and running, making a mental list of any files I may have downloaded in the past week that could have caused the problem. As the computer booted up, I walked away to let it do its thing. It was when I walked back into the room that I paused, a chill running through me.

There was a rather disturbing image sitting open on my desktop. I took it in, looking at it for a moment - a really bad photoshopping of the same Helios bust used on the cover of Floral Shoppe. The longer I stood looking at it, the more I was drawn into it. In the center of the image sat Helios, darkness surrounding him; noise jittered the picture, white dots and outlines filling in where data had been bent. His eyes were red and black, tinged with white, and it looked as though someone had tried to make the picture look like it was or had been crying. In the bottom right corner of the image, Helios was imposed over himself with blocky bits of yellow and red in high contrast. In the middle of the image, it looked like there was something else, I couldn't quite make it out, but it felt very familiar. It was hard to tell, but the longer I stared the longer I was stuck before the picture.

/Helios:Part 1

I'm not sure when I realized it, but noise was coming from my headphones, and, on edge, I put them over my ears just in time to hear the same track I had listened to before my computer had crashed, going cold as I heard a haunting, garbled "don't say no."

Audio Player

Audio Player

Audio Player

Audio Player

/Helios:Part 1

Maybe the autoplay protocol had opened the floppy on my desktop during bootup. In fact, I assured myself, that's exactly what happened. I closed the audio file and the image, turned off my monitor and sat down on my bed, more than disturbed for the evening. I wasn't exactly satisfied with my purchase, and I was in a foul mood, so I cracked open a book and tried to calm my nerves in the pages of Dumas. Some hours later I turned in for the night, due to my early start the next morning.

As I closed my eyes, the bizarre image that was on the floppy burned itself into the back of my eyelids. I actively tried to put it out of my mind and struggled with it for who knows how long until I finally fell asleep. I didn't rest well that night.

Audio Player

DONT SAY NO

DONT SAY NO

DONT



Audio Player

DONT SAY NO

The Crown of ADRIIFT

I had long dreamed of the forgotten art of whale hunting. My years of youth and vigor always felt misplaced in a horrid age of spirit-draining computers and the cacophony of everyday traffic. I used to read and revere the chronicles, studies, and even fictions of brave ancestors who, though not of my own lineage nor sons of my fatherland, always inspired in me the sense of a lost kinship.

From the late years of my childhood, this longing fostered in me a fascination for lost practices and sciences like phrenology, alchemy, typewriting and carpentry. I abhor the liberal arts that plague our era, this corrosive, progressive agenda that drives the hand of every painter and sculptor into the basic castration of the human impetus. Modern films are but crowd-pleasing commercials for poisons too mediocre or profitable to kill us at once. Forgive

my subjective definition, but I call art the once vital and now mythical acts for the sake of survival: farming, foraging, warfare, hunting, all acts which defined the beasts once called men.

I became enamored with one such act: whale hunting, thanks to my grandfather. Though a full, war-borne man, even he was cheated out of this noble practice by the times. Nonetheless, he became a collector of whale hunting paraphernalia: harpoons, spears, nets, photographs, paintings, diaries, and of course, many specimens.

I spent innumerable days of my youth in my grandfather's study, holding his whales in my hands, running my fingers over their smooth, rectangular frames, opening their bellies and exchanging the shiny contents of their chambers (of which my grandfather had an even more numerous collection, gathered in racks

upon the walls). With what innocent curiosity did I pick into the orifices of their anatomy, their earphone outlets, battery compartments, and external charge ports. My favorite was his yellow Sony Sport model, be it because of its merry color or the ergonomic grey grooves of its torso. How many strange and soothing melodies would come out of its spindles and readers and into my ears.

In time, my grandfather passed away and his collection was wasted away in the hands of my older relatives who, in their helpless simplicity, sold or gave away his specimens and cassettes.

Thus I grew up in modesty and constant struggle, engaging in whatever menial labor I could find in call centers, warehouses and grocery stores, saving all my money after rent, food, and utilities toward becoming ■ whale hunter.

of Man,

I bought all the out-of-print and banned manuals and guides, and joined clandestine chat rooms and message boards on the topic. I used to visit the local aquarium and stare at their pathetic specimens, caressing the blade of my knife, sucking on my lips and dreaming of the songs within their bellies.

One day, one of my more veteran contacts of the message board finally placed enough trust in me to link me to ■ corrupt coast guard in Odawa who granted me access to federally protected waters in exchange for ■ considerable portion of my life's savings.

I sailed for days on end on ■ small fishing boat for the object of my desires: a 1980 Crown Ch. 1. The literature defined it as ■ very rare species, even though it was once prosperous as the dominant predator in the region. I would sleep very little clutched against my harpoon. I would eat even less, just enough for my body to stay strong for the battle in my horizon. My body would rest like a loaded spring on a sturdy chair by the prow, with ■ large demijohn of drinking water to my right, and fresh cassettes on a bucket full of ice to my left to lure my opponent within my reach.

The fifth night spread over my obsessed heart and I began to suspect that the coast guard, or perhaps even my online contact, had made a fool of me. I was ready to sail back to land and lick my wounds when she appeared.

The fantastic specimen emerged from the waters a mere few meters away from me, floating idly. All the promises of my clash against nature disappeared like sea foam as the prey I long lusted after offered herself to me, ready to be picked up with my bare hands.

The Crown Ch. 1 model was even more beautiful and delectable to the touch than I could have ever imagined. Her body had a splendid beige hue all over, with the exception of its black chamber door adorned with a row of red squares, white

arrows, and the words, "Stereo" and "CH. 1" in a very tasteful font. The Play, F. Fwd, and Stop buttons were dark grey and had ■ nice grid texture that let my fingers operate the player with ease. To my surprise, the volume dial was not a wheel, as the sightings reported, but rather ■ sliding tab labeled by diminishing squares indicating the volume adjustment increasing from left to right. A strong, black strap was embedded on one side of the specimen, so I made use of it and hung her body around my neck as I proceeded to examine its battery compartment. I succeeded in prying it open to discover it required four AA batteries instead of two. The community would never believe it. I placed in four rechargeable batteries and closed the lid on order to test the sound once and for all.

I peeked inside and found a copy of the Pet Shop Boys' 1987 album "Actually" in decent state. I took out my earphones guided by the moonlight, as the waves applauded, crashing against the boat and plugged them into the small black orifice.

But then I simply couldn't feel it.

This magnificent whale crooned and vibrated in my hands. The sound of rusty synths and long-dead Englishmen flowed through my ears like honey upon the mouth of a newborn, but I simply could not feel it.

I unplugged my earphones and placed the creature back on the black waters. I was gone before the ocean called its sweet child back to its nurturing breast.

BDuranX2
FICTION WRITER



THROUGH THE LENS OF THE ABSURD

Vaporwave is the most absurd genre of music there is. Now hear me out before you go thinking this is an insult!

The absurd is defined as the unique clash that takes place between humans and the universe. Not by me, mind you, but by Albert Camus, a critical figure in the philosophy of existentialism—though he denied being an existentialist, or even a philosopher for that matter. According to him, this clash is the result of the human tendency to seek out meaning in life and the universe's utter refusal to provide us with it, or **■** least any we can find. As such, we find ourselves wanting and wanting hard.

And what is the solution to this conflict? Camus offers **■** few of them in his Nobel Prize winning essay "The Myth of Sisyphus."

The first solution is to simply kill yourself.

I should go on record and say that I do not condone suicide, but the fact of the matter is that themes of depression and suicide are highly present in many forms of vaporwave (with future funk perhaps being the exception). A quick Google image search of "vaporwave art" reveals images with text covering them that say such things as "Don't Dream," "I Surrender," and the obvious "Give Up," covering images of sculptures and busts with their heads facing downwards as if experiencing a sensation of utter defeat, surrendering to loneliness and to a life devoid of meaning while they slowly crumble into dust to be forgotten forever. Even the genre itself experienced death for a period, with cries of "Vaporwave is dead" echoing across the internet, though this was eventually overruled with cries of "Long live vaporwave" some time later.

Another answer to the absurd, and the one that Camus found to be the most common, is the act of elusion. We attempt to avoid or straight up ignore the idea that we might exist without purpose by distracting ourselves from this dark reality in any way we can, whether **■** be through narcotics, belief in a higher power, or the endless pursuit of material goods. Here we get to the

heart of the matter of vaporwave's relationship to humanity's absurd condition.

Vaporwave sarcastically preaches an almost fanatical devotion to consumerism. We have albums like 식료품groceries' 슈퍼마켓Yes! We're Open or 猫 √ Corp.'s *Palm Mall* that aim to replicate the sounds and feelings one might experience while wandering around a supermarket or indoor mall, desperately looking for something to purchase that will make it feel like we exist for a reason. Something, anything at all that will fill the void in us. Try as we might though, we can only deceive ourselves for so long. It is perhaps this reason that the shopping centers we envision when listening to a mallsoft album always seem so cold, lonely and abandoned.

Sometimes, we take our desire for material goods to the next level in a way that can only be described as decadent hedonism. Enter albums like Luxury Elite's *world class*, an album that conjures up images of the lifestyles of the ultra rich. When we listen to Luxury Elite's music, we do not imagine ourselves being simply comfortable or affluent. We imagine ourselves drunk on wealth. We don't just have money, we have "fuck you" money. With it, we will ride around in limousines, buy up whole jewelry stores, and chug bottles of champagne as if they were water. But this cash high can only be ridden for so long before you wake up one day, look up at your mirrored ceiling and say to yourself "Still, I hunger for more. Still, I am wanting."

We come then to a third solution, the only one that Camus personally recommends. There is **■** very good chance that we exist without any kind of purpose or meaning. We are on a large blue marble that is zipping around a giant ball of ignited gas at 67,000 miles per hour and we have absolutely no idea what we are doing and any attempt to figure it out has so far proven to be fruitless. But do you know what? That is okay.

We as listeners of vaporwave understand the absurdity of our condition. We are perfectly aware that chronic shopping, hedonism and suicide are not the answers we are looking for—and therefore we ironically mock them at every turn and in the raddest way possible. We take the ideas of consumerism and hyper-capitalism and we turn them into art.

Art is a subject that Camus was very vocal on, and to him, art was many things, but perhaps above all, it was a form of rebellion. "Artistic creation is a demand for unity and a rejection of the world." What Camus meant by that is that on canvas (or your computer) we have the ability to create the world as we feel it ought to be or sometimes, we can show society its flaws in a language all can understand. "...it rejects the world on account of what it lacks and in the name of what it sometimes is."

We accept the state of the world, but at the same time, we reject it and rebel against it. It is a bit of a paradox, I know, but the way I see it, every track of an album, every piece of glitch art, every cassette tape is a little rebellion.

Maybe I'm overcomplicating things. Perhaps the aesthetics of vaporwave are that way simply because we think they look cool. I am quite open to that possibility, but maybe I should listen to my own advice and stop trying to figure it all out. In other words, carry on, everyone. Do what makes you happy. To quote the man himself: "Just because you have pessimistic thoughts you don't have to act pessimistic. One has to pass the time somehow." So, with that said, if you need me, I will be on my balcony watching the sunset and enjoying an ice-cold bottle of Pepsi.

CASINO





息をすする

PATREON

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